

# **Horizon**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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**AT THE GRAVE OF HENRY JAMES**

*by* W. H. AUDEN

**DEMOCRACY AND LEADERSHIP**

*by* A. L. ROWSE

**FRAGMENT  
OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—III**

*by* AUGUSTUS JOHN

**VIRGINIA WOOLF**

*by* DUNCAN GRANT

**PAINTING IN AMERICA**

*by* JOHN ROTHENSTEIN

**THE MOMENT OF TRUTH**

*by* ANTONIA WHITE

REPRODUCTIONS OF PAINTINGS *by* JOAN RAYNER,  
CHARLES BURCHFIELD AND GRANT WOOD

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***Edited by Cyril Connolly***

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMMENT	377
AT THE GRAVE OF HENRY JAMES <i>W. H. Auden</i>	379
DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP <i>A. L. Rowse</i>	384
FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—III <i>Augustus John</i>	394
VIRGINIA WOOLF <i>Duncan Grant</i>	402
PAINTING IN AMERICA <i>John Rothenstein</i>	406
THE MOMENT OF TRUTH <i>Antonia White</i>	417

### REPRODUCTIONS:

Chelsea Old Church, by *Joan Rayner*, facing page 377. Main Street, by *Charles Burchfield*, and Daughters of the American Revolution, by *Grant Wood*, facing pages 406 and 407.

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# ZWEMMER'S HEMINGWAY WINDOW

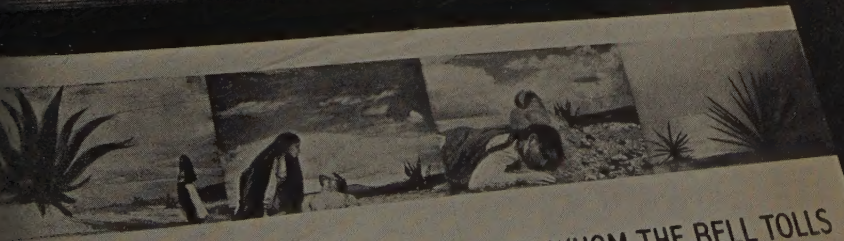
For Hemingway's new book 'For Whom The Bell Tolls' Zwemmer's have devised a window display which brings together an original grouping of art works to express the sombre Spanish spirit of the novel. Compounded of pages from Goya's 'Horrors of the War', Picasso's outstanding etching 'Minotauremachie' and stills from Eisenstein's epic film 'Que Viva Mexico', this presentation uses vivid pictorial imagery to form a composition mirroring conflict and tragedy under a sultry sky. Reaching beyond the empirical beauty of the display the dialectical waves of the world conflict beat upon our eyes. At once the aggressive nature of the maguey plant, the wounding male principle, stands out overwhelming the soft, gentle, introverted figure of the girl searching for her lover amidst the fields. Then she finds the half-buried body of her lover. Her eyes drift away like strange, long forgotten skies. Personality and nature have merged into one. Picasso's 'Minotauremachie', the pillar of intellectual and artistic fire which illuminates the entire window, contains the basic expression of the great psychological antagonism of our epoch, the conflict between Eros and Death Instinct. The bull-man, symbol of evil, seeks, unsuccessfully, to extinguish the light held aloft with calm serenity by the child, symbol of pure, conscious and potent love as opposed to the impotent perversions of our decadent epoch. The predatory fingers of the negation cannot penetrate the magic circle of life woven by the rays of the candle. And the Christ figure does not ascend his cross, recognizing that the problem of our time is not to learn how to die. What was historic necessity is now neurosis. The modern task is to learn how to live and to find the way home to oneself. In the words of the old magician Nietzsche, 'Deeper than pain is joy'. Deeper than crucifixion is life. The creative European Eros Imago emerges triumphant. Between the flowering of the instincts represented by the Minotaur and the child, and the achievement of their ethical sublimation in the Christ figure, in the background there lies nature, the healing expanse of the sea, beckoning us out of the twilight of our declining afternoon into the unending poem of regression.

R. FRIEDMANN

76-80 CHARING CROSS ROAD, LONDON, W.C.2



ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S  
MASTERPIECE  
FOR WHOM  
THE BELL TOLLS  
Any man that dies for his country  
has his name in the book of life  
and his name is not to be  
forgotten for them  
9¢



HEMINGWAY'S MASTERPIECE—FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS





CHELSEA OLD CHURCH by Joan Rayner

# COMMENT

THE case of *Horizon* is only one aspect and symptom of a more crucial and more comprehensive problem, which is the problem of British propaganda in its entirety. It is our opinion that any talk about "too much British propaganda" is preposterous and futile. The question is not whether the British are creating too much propaganda, but that they are not creating enough. At any rate there is not enough of the *right type* of British propaganda, and there could hardly be too much of it.

'It seems absurd and paradoxical that, at a moment when the slogan of *Union now* is so strongly in the air and in the headlines, the literary and progressive youth of the two great Anglo-Saxon democracies should know less about each other than ever before. If the British Ministry of Information would only recognize the importance of such organs as the *New Statesman* and *Horizon* for both morale at home and public opinion in this country, no doubt something could be done to increase the circulation of these magazines, or at least to protect them from imminent collapse. Why doesn't Mr. Duff Cooper appoint an editor of *Horizon*, or some other representative, to organize a branch of that publication and periodicals of a similar kind in this country?'

These quotations are from the Editorial of the American magazine *Decision*, and raise an important issue. In spite of diplomatic and economic co-operation between England and the U.S.A. and the exchange of a few ace cinema men and journalists, there is no communication between the artists and intellectuals of the two countries. Journalists like Reynolds can do much, but not enough. In the Spanish War a stream of writers flowed into Spain, and the long-term results of their visits were very great. To-day, like the Spanish Government, we are fighting a lonely battle; we look to America, our last remaining audience, for sympathy, as the Spaniards looked to France and England. There is something to be gained by sending some of our nightingales to America, but far more by inviting some Americans here. *Horizon* suggests that the Government invites about a hundred representative American writers, painters, photographers, editors and artistic directors to visit England. They should be asked to come at their own risk and should be conveyed here and back by air, and treated to three weeks of our unique summer. A hundred should be asked, of whom about forty, or two Clippersful, might find they could



spare the time. They should not be given a programme of charabancs and champagne lunches, but be grouped into small parties according to the kind of people they wished to meet and the places they wanted to see. There should be many houses open to them and a variety of tours, for example a visit to the Georgian architecture of Bath, Clifton, and Cheltenham, as well as to Plymouth and Bristol; to the haunts of Tennyson, James, or Coleridge, as well as to Dover. They should be under no obligation to write anything when they returned. Yet not only would our case be better understood in America, our summer would be brightened here. Last September the gay, neat, courageous presence through the London Blitz of Miss Erika Mann was a delight to those who met her. How much encouragement we should get if Chaplin, Thurber, Sherwood, Steinbeck, Edmund Wilson, Marjorie Moore, Mumford, Kirstein, Orson Welles, John Ford, Hemingway, Lewis, Paul Muni, and photographers like Walker Evans and Cartier Bresson were among us! An island fortress must always be on its guard against provincialism. The visit of such Americans would not only bring friendship and hope to our garrison, but would let some daylight in.

There are few objections to this scheme. (1) The cost; though owing to the high Clipper fares, would be considerable, but would be a drop in the bucket of our war effort, and there might be several ingenious ways of meeting it.

(2) At present the U.S.A. does not allow its citizens to visit the war zones, but an exception is made for journalists. The U.S. has more newspapers than any country; it should not be difficult to accredit the members of the cultural mission to them.

(3) Who is going to choose them? We have in this country a great English writer who is also an American, T. S. Eliot, who should certainly preside. We have representatives of American publishers, like John Carter; we have people intimately connected with the artistic and literary worlds of America, and we have, at the other end, writers like Somerset Maugham, who could take charge. It is imperative that young, rising, and serious writers, however little known here, should be invited rather than the more famous and more weary brethren for a summer holiday which might presage the delights of Federation.

This much *Horizon* can suggest to *Decision*, but we can only suggest and hope that others will take us up and act.



W. H. AUDEN

## AT THE GRAVE OF HENRY JAMES

The snow, less intransigent than their marble,  
Has left the defence of whiteness to these tombs;  
For all the pools at my feet  
Accommodate blue, now, and echo such clouds as occur  
To the sky, and whatever bird or mourner the passing  
Moment remarks they repeat.

While the rocks, named after singular spaces  
Within which images wandered once that caused  
All to tremble and offend,  
Stand here in an innocent stillness, each marking the spot  
Where one more series of errors lost its uniqueness  
And novelty came to an end.

To whose real advantage were such transactions  
When worlds of reflection were exchanged for trees?  
What living occasion can  
Be just to the absent? O noon but reflects on itself,  
And the small taciturn stone that is the only witness  
To a great and talkative man,

Has no more judgment than my ignorant shadow  
Of odious comparisons or distant clocks  
Which challenge and interfere  
With the heart's instantaneous reading of time, time that is  
A warm enigma no longer in you for whom I  
Surrender my private cheer.

Startling the awkward footsteps of my apprehension,  
The flushed assault of your recognition is  
The *donnée* of this doubtful hour:  
O stern proconsul of intractable provinces,  
O poet of the difficult, dear addicted artist,  
Assent to my soil and flower.

As I stand awake on our solar fabric,  
That primary machine, the earth, which gendarmes, banks,  
    And aspirin presuppose,  
On which the clumsy and sad may all sit down, and any who will  
Say their a-ha to the beautiful, the common locus  
    Of the master and the rose.

Our theatre, scaffold, and erotic city  
Where all the infirm species are partners in the act  
    Of encroachment bodies crave,  
Though solitude in death is *de rigueur* for their flesh,  
And the self-denying hermit flies as it approaches  
    Like the carnivore to a cave.

That its plural numbers may unite in meaning,  
Its vulgar tongues unravel the knotted mass  
    Of the improperly conjunct,  
Open my eyes now to its hinted significant figures,  
Sharpen my ears to detect amid its brilliant uproar  
    The low thud of the defunct.

O dwell ironic at my living centre,  
Half ancestor, half child; because the actual self  
    Round whom time revolves so fast  
Is so afraid of what its motions might possibly do,  
That the actor is never there when his really important  
    Acts happen. Only the past

Is present, no one about but the dead as,  
Equipped with a few inherited odds and ends,  
    One after another we are  
Fired into life to seek that unseen target where all  
Our equivocal judgments are judged and resolved in  
    One whole alas or hurrah.

And only the unborn mark the disaster  
When, though it makes no difference to the pretty airs  
    The bird of Appetite sings,  
And Amour Propre is his usual amusing self,  
Out from the jungle of an undistinguished moment  
    The flexible Shadow springs.

Perhaps the honour of a great house, perhaps its  
 Cradles and tombs may persuade the bravado of  
     The bachelor mind to doubt  
 The dishonest path, or save from disgraceful collapse  
 The creature's shrinking withness bellowed at and tickled  
     By the huge Immodest Without.

Now more than ever when torches and snare-drum  
 Excite the squat women of the saurian brain  
     Till a milling mob of fears  
 Break in insultingly on anywhere, when in our dreams  
 Pigs play on the organs and the blue sky runs shrieking  
     As the Crack of Doom appears,

Are the good ghosts needed with the white magic  
 Of their subtle loves. War has no ambiguities  
     Like a marriage; the result  
 Required of its *affaire fatale* is simple and sad,  
 The physical removal of all human objects  
     That conceal the Difficult.

Then remember me that I may remember  
 The test we have to learn to shudder for is not  
     An historical event,  
 That neither the low democracy of a nightmare nor  
 An army's primitive tidings may deceive me  
     About our predicament.

That catastrophic situation which neither  
 Victory nor defeat can annul: to be  
     Deaf yet determined to sing,  
 To be lame and blind yet burning for the Great Good Place,  
 To be essentially corrupt yet mournfully attracted  
     By the Real Distinguished Thing.

Let this orchard point to its stable arrangement  
 Of accomplished bones as a proof that our lives  
     Conceal a pattern which shows  
 A tendency to execute formative movements, to have  
 Definite experiences in their execution,  
     To rejoice in knowing it grows.



And shall I not specially bless you as, vexed with  
 My little inferior questions, to-day I stand  
     Beside the bed where you rest  
 Who opened such passionate arms to your Bon when it ran  
 Towards you with its overwhelming reasons pleading  
     All beautifully in its breast?

O with what innocence your hand submitted  
 To those formal rules that help a child to play,  
     While your heart, fastidious as  
 A delicate nun, remained true to the rare noblesse  
 Of your lucid gift, and for its own sake ignored the  
     Resentful muttering Mass.

Whose ruminant hatred of all which cannot  
 Be simplified or stolen is still at large;  
     No death can assuage its lust  
 To vilify the landscape of Distinction and see  
 The heart of the Personal brought to a systolic standstill,  
     The Tall to diminished dust.

Preserve me, Master, from its vague incitement,  
 Yours be the disciplinary image that holds  
     Me back from agreeable wrong,  
 And the clutch of eddying muddle, lest Proportion shed  
 The alpine chill of her shrugging editorial shoulder  
     On my loose impromptu song.

Suggest; so may I segregate my disorder  
 Into districts of prospective value: approve;  
     Lightly, lightly then may I dance  
 Over the frontier of the obvious and fumble no more  
 In the old limp pocket of the minor exhibition,  
     Nor riot with irrelevance.

And no longer shoe geese or water stakes but  
 Bolt in my day my grain of truth to the barn  
     Where tribulations may leap  
 With their long-lost brothers at last in the festival  
 Of which not one has a dissenting image, and the  
     Flushed immediacy sleep.

Knowing myself a mobile animal descended  
 From an ancient line of respectable fish,  
     With a certain méchant charm,  
 Occupying the earth for a grass-grown interval between  
 Two oscillations of polar ice, engaged in weaving  
     His conscience upon its calm.

Despising Now yet afraid of Hereafter,  
 Unable in spite of his stop-watch and lens  
     To imagine the rising Rome  
 To which his tools and tales migrate, to guess from what shore  
 The signal will flash, to observe the anarchist's gestation  
     In the smug constricted home.

Into this city from the shining lowlands  
 Blows a wind that whispers of uncovered skulls  
     And fresh ruins under the moon,  
 Of hopes that will not survive the *secousse* of this spring,  
 Of blood and flames, of the terror that walks by night and  
     The sickness that strikes at noon.

All will be judged. Master of nuance and scruple,  
 Pray for me and for all writers living or dead;  
     Because there are many whose works  
 Are in better taste than their lives, because there is no end  
 To the vanity of our calling: make intercession  
     For the treason of all clerks.

Because the darkness is never so distant,  
 And there is never much time for the arrogant  
     Spirit to flutter its wings,  
 Or the broken bone to rejoice, or the cruel to cry,  
 For Him whose property is always to have mercy, the author  
     And giver of all good things.

A. L. ROWSE

# DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

*'The world at large wants a clear lead, and it is from the artists, writers and teachers, to whom Horizon appeals, that plain directives must come, if they are to come at all.'*—H. G. WELLS.

THE trouble with so much of our talk about democracy is that with the talk the concept has become progressively emptied of meaning. We are supposed—and as I think rightly, if we understand all that it implies—to be fighting this war for the cause of democracy. Yet I doubt if there are many who are at all clear about what is meant by it, or are in fact roused to enthusiasm by the name under which they fight. So many of those who think must have been depressed by the hesitations, the incompetence, the disillusionments, the fraudulences of the past decade—the most disgusting and disquieting in our latter history, that has led us not surprisingly to where we are to-day—that they may think of the standard of democracy as rather moth-eaten. Yet they would not be wholly right, in spite of so many evidences on the surface of our political life, any more than Mr. Eliot was wholly right in regarding liberalism as 'worm-eaten'—though again there was a good deal in what he said. We must, in short—it is a matter of urgent necessity—do some new and plain thinking on this subject, disregarding the clichés and soft illusions with which the 'supporters' of democracy have coddled themselves and us into so many defeats that need never have been. If we are to win, we must at least have the intellectual courage to face unpleasant truths about our own cause.

It is only comparatively recently that the meaning of democracy has become so vague—as vague and diffuse as 'socialism,' or 'liberty.' The nineteenth century—to take such admirable writers as Cornewall Lewis or Bagehot—attached a perfectly clear meaning to the term: they meant, as Aristotle meant, a form of government determined by the predominance of the propertyle



Many as against the Few—and as such they feared and deplored it. (They need not have feared it so much: little did they realize that as the franchise was widened to include the bulk of a politically immature and uneducated people, the influence of property upon the political life of the nation did not necessarily decrease, nor the influence of money upon the results of elections.) As the franchise was extended the meaning of democracy became more diffuse with it, and people were ready to accept Abraham Lincoln's befoozling 'government *of* the people *by* the people *for* the people' as not only the last word in political wisdom, but as telling them something about the nature of democracy. But Lincoln was not a political thinker, but a practical politician; he knew how important it is to tell the people what they like to hear.

But government can never in our large nation-states be *by* the people in any effective sense; it may be—and since we are democrats, should be—by their true representatives, those who represent their real interest, the general interest of the community. Those are not necessarily the majority. I can conceive of cases—have we not the Hitlerite plebiscites before us as an example?—of a government getting a ninety-five per cent vote of the people and yet not representing that people's true interest; conversely it may be a small minority who really express the general interest. It so happens that in the last decade, the 'National' government had an immense majority of the country with it at the general elections of 1931 and 1935. But the whole course of their actions showed that they did not really represent the interests of the country. (The very fact that they knew this themselves operated in a subtle way to paralyse their action.) Events caught them out in the end; if the Conservative party, which was the reality of power behind the façade of 'National' government—a name which now stinks in the nostrils of decent-thinking people—if that party, with the propertied classes behind it, had but done its simple duty by the interests of the country and people it purported to represent we should not now be fighting for our very survival as a nation.

Conversely the forces of the Left, centreing upon the Labour Movement—though they made every conceivable mistake, quarrelled incessantly among themselves, refused to unite or even work together in face of the gravest danger, put their second-rate figures up as leaders for the country to follow, made no effective

use of the immense resources of ability and devotion among the younger generation, had no sense of effective popular appeal, no sense of propaganda, no sense of power, and like what Henry Nevinson said of the (Tsarist) Russian Army, which 'had no sense of time or space: it was always late and never knew where it was':—yet, in spite of this deplorable record, the simple fact was that the Left represented the true interests of the people of this country, who voted them down practically every time they presented themselves for a mandate to govern. Events proved that to be true: in politics the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It was the series of disasters and betrayals and defeats associated, as it will be for ever in our history, with the name of Chamberlainism, which forced the Churchill-Labour government into power; not a majority in Parliament, which was indeed against it. Not for some time did a majority come round to it in the *Chambre introuvable*, that deplorable assembly elected by the fraud of 1935 and never yet renewed. An anomalous situation, to be sure, to find in the name of democracy!

And yet it is hardly exceptional. During the twenty-three years which elapsed since the last war this country has been continuously governed by the Conservative party—the political instrument of the propertied classes—save for two brief intervals in 1923 and 1929-1931. Yet in order to gain power, at every election at which they succeeded, it was necessary for the Tories to resort to either panic or fraud. In 1918 it was the Khaki election and Hang the Kaiser; in 1924 it was the Red Letter scare; in 1931 it was the panic over the pound sterling, the banks and Red Ruin; in 1935 it was a pretty little piece of Baldwin trickery about the Conservatives supporting the League of Nations against Mussolini, when it followed immediately the attempted Hoare-Laval swindle. Perhaps panics and frauds are in politics the tribute that vice pays to virtue; better anyway than the overt rule of gangsters and concentration camps. It may, however, without unfairness be concluded that the rule of the Conservative party is not good for democracy; while the ten years of National government sapped and undermined the foundations of our political life. Indeed, everybody will agree now that if the Chamberlain government—backed as it was by a strong majority—had lasted a moment longer, this country had been irretrievably lost. The reason for the deterioration of our political standards, for the systematic

befogging the public mind on issues of the gravest importance, for the sickening insincerity and living hypocrisy which was the very nature of National Government (Baldwin-MacDonald-Chamberlain-Simon-Hoare-Runciman: how a common character runs through them all) was simply that their position was a false one from the very beginning: their whole pretence was that they represented the bulk of the nation—and the bulk of the nation was fool enough to believe them, until events taught them in the blood of their sons—while all the while they represented really only the interest of a small minority, the moneyed classes of the country.

## II

What light do these facts throw upon the nature and working of democracy in this country? Can we be said to be a democracy at all? What are we to do to reform matters, and not merely to put them right, but to bring them into relation with the claims we make for ourselves, the cause for which we are now fighting? How to explain? How to relate the facts to democratic theory?

It is not difficult. Rousseau as usual goes to the heart of the matter with a clear, candid generalization. He says, speaking of the general will in a society which a government should represent: 'What generalizes the will is not so much the number of the votes as the general interest that unites them.' The central problem of democratic politics becomes then how to bring the voting power into relation with the general interest of the community.

The plain and practical answer to that, and indeed the obvious deduction to be drawn from all that has happened in our internal politics in the past twenty years is that we must at least *clear the channels*, so as to give democracy a chance of working at all. It is an absolute *sine qua non* of democracy existing. As things have been, the real interest of the people has been thwarted, frustrated, deflected, vamped, seduced, their votes solicited for the benefit of others, bought indirectly if not directly, influenced when they were not commanded by the overt economic power of employer or landlord: in short the electorate, or a sufficient amount of it to turn the scale, influenced in a hundred different ways which it



would take a whole volume to describe.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately intellectuals, under the influence of the rationalist fallacy and with experience of practical politics, are apt not to appreciate the decisive importance of these methods and influences. But the fact is, *they must be stopped if we are to achieve an effective democracy, the channels cleared for the real interest and will of the people to flow rightly and naturally.*

Most of our political system, in some cases the institutions themselves, in others the way they operate, is arranged in favour of the existing order. The very complexity of it for one thing is a factor holding up progress. It is all very natural and historical: these institutions come down in a long tradition from an early social order. It is equally natural and in the logic of history that they should be brought into relation with changed circumstances. Our political institutions, in short, will need thorough overhauling when the war is over; they will need to be greatly simplified and made more directly responsive to the interests of the great bulk of the people. Take a few examples. In case the Left should by some mischance win a general election, there is the House of Lords to prevent it carrying its policy into action. It must be ended, quite simply: those who have not studied the subject would hardly believe its record of effective obstruction and mauling of progressive measures.<sup>2</sup> (We owe the poisoning of our relations with Ireland largely to the action of the Lords in holding up Home Rule and remedial land legislation in the nineteenth century.) Take the anomalous relation of the State to the Anglican Church: it would be a ridiculous absurdity, as it is certainly an anachronism, if it did not play a most subtle and persuasive part in helping the existing order to stick together. There is no intellectual defence for it:<sup>3</sup> the proper place for churches in the modern community is as free and voluntary associations of those who want that sort of thing, and those who want it pay for it.

<sup>1</sup>I suggest this as a more profitable subject for political research than most that have been undertaken—for example, studies of Public Opinion. As if Public Opinion were an independent entity!

<sup>2</sup>I have studied this record in *The Question of the House of Lords*. (Hogarth Press.)

<sup>3</sup>As the candid ex-Bishop of Durham recognizes; v. H. Hensley Henson, *Disestablishment*.

Take again the structure of local government. The County Councils have had enormously increased powers conferred upon them. Yet, with two or three exceptions, London, Durham, Glamorgan, they are entirely in the hands of the propertied classes, and it is virtually impossible for the Left to have any voice on them, let alone effective representation. Working men can afford neither the time nor the money to sit on them; there would not be the men even if they could. It would be far more representative and truly democratic if—once the mandate is given by the people at a general election for a Left government at the centre—that government were then to appoint its representative in each county to administer it with the aid of appointed advisory committees. The ending of the County Councils would raise not a murmur: they have no real existence in the will of the people. Smaller local bodies like town and parish councils have a more real existence and are more truly representative in character. They might be retained—though everybody knows there is a certain deterioration in public interest, and perhaps even in standards, in these local bodies.<sup>1</sup> With the far greater complexity of modern government, their affairs are increasingly run by their officials. The important thing is to organize on a national basis the municipal civil service, give it national status and standards, bring it along with other black-coat workers, for example the teachers, into their proper place alongside the workers organized under the T.U.C. (It would be so good both for them and for the T.U.C.)

Or there is the electoral system. Only those who have had experience of it as candidates or party workers can have any idea of how it is weighted in favour of the existing order. The Conservative party caucus has got a fund of several millions at its disposal collected by selling honours and in other ways (another subject for investigation: the whole question of titles, with all its social consequences, in a democracy). The influence of that is enormous: they can buy all the posting-stations, put forth millions of posters and leaflets, organize mass-canvassing. In the counties they possess all the cars on polling-day; in the towns and villages practically all the best party premises and clubs. It is already something to possess the great estates—the best places for garden-fêtes and all the ways and means by which the more stupid of the people

<sup>1</sup>Cf. an interesting article in the *Fabian Quarterly*, 1941.

actually pay for the privilege of voting conservative and keeping the upper classes in power. There are all the innumerable influences of social snobbery at their disposal, in addition to the large voting bags of the domestic servant class and the agricultural interest. It is not for nothing that the earth is theirs and the fullness thereof. Indeed, when you consider the range and importance of these forces under their control, it is a wonder that the Labour Movement has any electoral support at all. (A tribute to the goodness of human nature, perhaps.) It is pleasant to reflect that after the war is over—what with the sale of securities abroad, the enormous diminution in the returns to the rentier on investments, increased taxation, etc., a good deal of this will be changed anyhow: there will not be so much money about for them to do what they like with the electoral system.

Again there is the Press to be considered, not merely as an industry, but as a social institution. It is intolerable that after the war a handful of millionaires should continue to hold the irresponsible power and exert the nefarious influence they have done since cheering Poincaré and the Comité des Forges on in their Russian enterprise against a Republican Germany, supporting Japanese aggression in Manchuria, pushing appeasement with Hitler and Nazi Germany, backing Mussolini as the Conservative press did ever since he came into power right up to Abyssinia and even after, supporting Franco against the friends and the interests of this country. No, that can not be tolerated if this country is to be an effective democracy: democracy does not mean *laissez-faire* for Press-magnates any more than it means *laissez-faire* in industry and economic affairs. Public control of the Press by a government which really represented the interest of the community—it might be organized as a corporation with a certain amount of independence like the B.B.C., all journalists being affiliated to the T.U.C. through the N.U.J.—would be far more democratic than the present antiquated feudalism of the Press, with the Press lords as the 'over-mighty subjects' of to-day.

All these political and social institutions do but reflect the fundamental character of the economic system. That will be brought under public control; it is very largely so, under various forms, now as in the last war. But at the conclusion of this, it will not be possible to scrap it as they did after the last war. The whole thing has gone too far and become too necessary for industry



be able to run without it. Effective democracy, that is to say, requires socialism in economic matters to complete and implement it. That is not to say any of the idealistic moonshine of the Guild Socialism or Workers' Control variety: the public control of industry requires varied forms of organization to suit the circumstances of the particular case, leaving plenty of room where appropriate for private enterprise in the interstices of the system.

### III

It can be seen what a work of clearing the ground and of rebuilding there is before us. To tackle it at all adequately, we shall need fresh thinking, a new mentality untrammelled by the clichés that have rendered social-democracy so ineffective in the past. To make democracy effective there are three essentials: Leadership, Propaganda, Education.

I notice that Priestley is a little frightened of the word 'leadership.' He need not be: it is not leadership that we have had from our ruling classes in the past twenty years, but systematized fraudulence. He must not be: for people have not caught up with the fact that there has been a revolutionary change in politics since the nineteenth century: where then there was a small electorate of a million and a half, of a fairly high standard of political intelligence, there is now an electorate of twenty millions, whose standard of intelligence and outlook is pretty accurately gauged by the popular press and the films. In their own interest they must have leadership. To abdicate the task is fatal; it only means that the job will be undertaken by the gangsters or their gentlemanly collaborators. That was the fatal mistake of social-democracy, not to have given the masses leadership, to have had no sense of appealing to them, no imagination, no sense of power. The Fascists have had all this—hence their success—and used it for criminal purposes; we must be just as effective and skilful, for the right purposes: we know what they are: we are agreed about that. Nor do I mean by leadership the Führerprinzip: I mean the group leadership which organizes all the effective nuclei throughout the country, the ones and twos and half-dozens, hardly more than that, in each town and village, every shop, factory, school and university, those who possess the indispensable gift of political initiative, infinitely rarer than intelligence—though I do not wish

to depreciate intelligence. These people—it may be a china-clay worker in Cornwall, a bus-conductor in Oxford, an R.A. mechanic—will often astonish you by the soundness and grasp of their political understanding, where the judgment of intellectuals is often hopelessly at sea. These are the people who indicate their own selves: it is they whom we must bring together and appeal to. They must understand each other, for these the real leadership in the democratic community is to be found.

Our message must be directed above all to them, helping to clarify their objectives, bringing them together, particularly since they belong to the generation which will emerge from the war. Above all keeping in touch with them. This is merely part of the function of Propaganda. Social Democracy again had no conception of the cardinal function of propaganda in the modern state (as in all states); it idiotically left the devil all the best tunes. Is it any wonder that it was defeated? Anyone might say that it was just asking to be defeated, and serve it right—if it were not that the consequences were so tragic. But it is clear that a modern state can no more dispense with a Propaganda Ministry than a medieval state could with the Church—which was indeed its Propaganda Ministry; nor is it likely that we shall be able to dispense with our propaganda organs after the war any more than we shall with the public control of industry. The real point is to see that the right people get hold of them and use them for the right ends.

No less important than Propaganda—though not more so for liberals and rationalists are apt to think—is Education. It is obvious that our educational system is at a standstill. And no wonder, for the direction in which progress is to be made entirely depends on what happens to the social system. As organized at present the educational system exactly corresponds to the social order: the elementary schools for the working class, the secondary schools for the lower middle class, the public schools for the upper middle class, Eton for the aristocracy and the rich. In the existing state the churches are trying to rush in and steal a march on the people while their attention is directed to the war, to put across a body of worn-out doctrine which no longer represents what the thinking part of the nation thinks, and impose it on the schools and teachers. It is not my business to deal with education here, but the right principle is that the educational system should

brought into conformity with the changed and more egalitarian society that will emerge from the war.

Wells asks for directives: here are some. They need not be agreed to in detail, but I should expect them in their general aims to represent a considerable body of agreement.

It is now possible to answer our questions. If something like these things are achieved, then we may call ourselves effectively a democracy. Until they are achieved there sounds something equivocal in the name, and one cannot expect to be roused to enthusiasm by it. All the same, those objectives are implied by the cause we are fighting for; if it were to be defeated, we need not bother ourselves about such objectives. We are a democracy already, in the sense that our political institutions give us a chance of changing the political and social order if we make up our minds to change it. That is a cardinal difference already from totalitarian systems; no amount of voting can change them, only blood and force, defeat in war. We already exemplify those ultimate values which are the glory of democracy as against the brutality and barbarism of totalitarianism: freedom of thought and expression, the seed-bed of art and science and culture, the belief in the value of the human personality, which of all the great contributions of Christianity to the world, may well prove the greatest and the most enduring. It may well be, that if we hold on and remain faithful, we may succeed in this country in giving a new lead to Europe: a more human and more hopeful conception of a society at once democratic and socialist than the morose example provided by Moscow which has so divided and misled us since 1917.



# AUGUSTUS JOHN

## FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—II

THE system followed at the Slade entailed a preliminary course of drawing from the 'Antique' presumably so as to purify and elevate the student's taste before he could be judged fit to deal with the raw materials of Life itself. Having, according to instructions, provided myself with a box of *fusains*, some sheets of *Papier Ingres* and a portion of bread, I set to upon the *Discobolus* and had finished him off, as I thought, in under ten minutes, with a few sweeping strokes. A visit from Henry Tonks, however, persuaded me that my rendering of this masterpiece, though bold indeed, was on the whole too summary. I had no right yet, seemed, to draw like a Greek vase painter.

Tonks, though a severe critic and inclined to indulge in sarcasm, was not discouraging. This remarkable man's austere and rather forbidding features concealed under his Dantesque mask a kind, humorous, susceptible, naïf and somewhat child-like nature. He applied himself to the teaching of drawing with fanatical zeal. The Slade was his great passion, and if his sensibility sometimes called for lesser ones, he had not far to go, for the personnel of his female students afforded him an immediate and varied choice of suitable objects. The Slade in my day abounded in ornament and talented girls. The men for the most part cut a shabbier figure and displayed fewer intellectual pretensions.

When at last promoted to the 'Life', I entered the studio with feelings of awe and reverence, which changed into something like panic when I beheld the model, an Italian girl, posed upon the 'throne'. Perfect beauty always intimidates: overcome for a moment by a strange sensation of weakness at the knees, I hastily seated myself and with a trembling hand began to draw, or pretend to draw this dazzling apparition. My fellow students appearing, on the contrary, to be quite at their ease and almost indifferent, as though well accustomed to such a spectacle, as of course they were; the respect with which I regarded them became

intensified and I felt myself to be in the presence of genius. This impression underwent some modification when I was able to examine the drawings around me, but in my modesty I was inclined to attribute my doubts to inexperience and an undeveloped critical faculty. Though indeed the word genius was inapplicable to the class as a whole, there were not absent in it several individuals of at least talent and intelligence. I became very friendly with Ambrose McEvoy and Benjamin Evans. The latter I had already met at that frightful school at Clifton. Somewhat later William Orpen arrived. He had been the prize-boy at Dublin and continued his successful career as a student at the Slade. His great industry, accompanied by an engaging Irish whimsicality made him generally popular. No one would have suspected this droll little fellow of the hard and calculating tenacity of purpose which was to bring him so soon to the top of the ladder. Although this instrument turned out to be constructed of unseasoned wood and showed early symptoms of warping, it held during his life-time and he succeeded in surmounting that edifice of big business against which he had set it up. Art, Orpen discovered, when liberally sweetened with vulgarity, becomes palatable even to a Tycoon.

An expedition to Amsterdam which I made with Evans and McEvoy on the occasion of Rembrandt's centenary was an event of some importance in my career. Having very little money, we spent our nights in a common lodging-house, visiting the Ryks Museum each day and wandered by the canals of old Amsterdam embuing ourselves on a diet of herrings and schnapps, with the all-pervasive spirit of the master. Here the last vestigial wraiths of Pre-Raphaelitism faded away before the impact of the Dutchman's robust yet brooding genius, and the poetry of common humanity replaced the sorcery of Mallory's dim and lovely world. A visit to Belgium, another time, with the same companions, helped to familiarize me with the Flemish masters, for whom I felt a deep and natural sympathy.

Perhaps after all we might just as well have stayed at home as Rembrandt did, for by taking a bus to Trafalgar Square do we not find, in the National Gallery, the pickings of all Europe? Such progress as is possible seems at any rate to necessitate a backward route. As by way of the eighteenth we arrive at the seventeenth century, so by another stage we reach the Renaissance and from

there overtake the 'Primitives' to linger at Byzantium before plunging into Antiquity. This of course leads us to the East and Pre-History where at last crawling into the caverns of Paleolithic man we think we have come to the end of the journey when to our surprise we emerge in the Dordogne which is but a step from Aix and the Jas du Bouffan. We have been travelling in a circle and got home again.

Ambrose McEvoy, as a youth, cultivated an arresting and sympathetic appearance. He wore his dark hair cut straight and low across his brow in a Beardsley fringe. His cadaverous moustache ornamented with its crystal disc was supported on a lofty Spencerian cylinder of muted white. His spare and muscled frame moved with agility on its twin spindles tipped with patent leather; the whole forming an elegant 'Arrangement in Black' when he spoke, and he spoke continually, the plaintive mew of an immature seagull was recalled. His mind, fresh, curious and enthusiastic as a child's, was overcome too frequently by a child's timidity. For him things and people were either 'pleasant' or 'unpleasant.' Thoroughly introvert, he knew no other categories. I envied him his faculty of knocking off an effective design, for he never seemed to 'work hard.' At its best life for him was a kind of stage-play, preferably a melodrama, to be enacted with the ironic gusto and exaggeration of an amateur barnstormer. Naturally there were depressing moments between the acts.

This facility for quick design to which I have alluded, may have been the result, if it was not the cause, of his early employment as a comic-strip draughtsman, for he used to work in this capacity for a journal called, if I remember, *Nuts*. The vestiges of this form may be detected in his later manner. He was a natural comedian with a perfectly serious substratum. One could never have wished for a more amiable or loyal friend.

Concurrently with my reading of *Leaves of Grass* and my bias towards the ideology of the *Trimardeur*, I was becoming increasingly *sans-culotte* and the ever-changing and incalculable rules of fashion left me unaffected.

In spite, however, of a superficial appearance of negligence my mode of dress was not unstudied and had a style of its own. I had my own standards in which both aesthetic and ethical values were conjoined. My prospective father-in-law, J. T. Nettles,



would regard the state of my footwear with foreboding and suggest with some diffidence that an occasional polish would help to preserve the leather. He spoke in this respect, with but little authority, going about as he did, habitually, barefooted. J. T. Nettleship, friend and commentator of Browning, painted wild animals in conflict. If his zoological pictures left me uncomfortably cold, I realized that his knowledge of anatomy was sound. His carnivores, though sticky, were well-constructed. It was at his house that I met an old gentleman bearing the magic name of William Michael Rossetti, and also a young one, Walter Sickert, who was emerging from the anonymity of *élève de Whistler*. Nettleship told me he had once asked Aubrey Beardsley why he drew such 'damned ugly women'. This was like blasphemy to me who greatly admired Beardsley's charming and corrupt moppets.

On being approached, Nettleship showed a surprising lack of sympathy for the 'Free Life' views which his daughter and I shared, so conceding him a civil marriage, we, *en revanche*, had it celebrated in secret. When later the cat was out of the bag he bore no umbrage and remained my very good friend. Upon his death-bed, he would declaim page after page of Browning. He assured me that God was 'nearer to him than the door', and at the last when no powers of volition seemed possible in his extenuated body, his arm went up like a semaphore and could not be kept down.

Evans was a singular being. An intelligent and witty draughtsman and a curious critic he was deeply versed in Rembrandt. He encouraged me to attempt etching and my first plate was a portrait of him. His humouristic turn was peculiar and seemed to mask a private sense of inadequacy, which when it did not disconcert always excited my laughter and amazement. Only at times a strain of defeatism in his nature led him to exceed in dullness and banality anyone I have met. His role of stolid and facetious wise-acre served as a useful counterfoil to McEvoy's ebullience and my romanticism. I held him in high regard and considered him on perhaps insufficient evidence to be immensely gifted. Whatever his gifts may have been he ended by transferring them to the problems of sanitary engineering and as far as was concerned went, in fact, down the drain.

My sister Gwen joined me at the Slade and we set up together

for a while in rooms. Hitherto I had lodged in a series of Bloomsbury boarding-houses. Converted to the principles of Frisianism, we both eschewed bread, meat and vegetables and supported life on a régime of fruit and nuts.

These were the days of the New English Art Club, the *Yellow Book* and the *Saturday Review*. A strong Gallic cultural infusion was noticeable in the more active artistic and literary circles in London. Will Rothenstein spoke familiarly of names which were already almost legendary. He seemed to have met all the outstanding figures in Paris and drawn them too. His lively intelligence and wit, associated with an insistent and vigorous personality had a compelling quality impossible to withstand. His introduction of the then little known personality of Goya in a book he published at this time opened up a new, wonderful and not too distant world where the artist lived dangerously and with the athleticism of a bull-fighter coquetted with death under the affrighted eyes of his favourite *Maja* to an accompaniment of the fatal music of guitars.

Will Rothenstein, Robert Ross, More Adey and Arthur Clifton opened the Carfax Galleries in St. James's and I held my first show there. It was not unsuccessful, and with £30 in my pocket I proceeded to France where, with Rothenstein, Conder and Orpen and two or three ladies, we passed a summer at *Vattetot-sur-Mer*, a village near Étretat in Normandy. According to Rothenstein I was to expect on meeting Charles Conder, to find a kind of bull-necked athlete before me. I was surprised therefore and somewhat relieved too when he turned out to be the charming but not physically formidable type I was to know so well. Though I may have formerly been the husky fellow described by Will, I appeared, when I met him, to be singularly out of training. I wore his blonde hair rather long and a pendant lock always fell over one malicious blue eye. His exhausted and muffled voice was sometimes almost inaudible, making his conversation a little difficult to follow. Perhaps he counted on leaving his audience to some extent in a state of doubt as to his meaning. His gait was inclined to shuffle, for he was, as he admitted, somewhat goitered at the knees. However, he was still capable of great endurance and walking from Vattetot to Vaucotte out-distanced everybody and was always first in at the Casino. Conder, with a bottle of Pernod at his elbow, painted fans, filling the silken fabric with

personages out of the *Commedia del Arte*; but these, under his hand, had by a process of exquisite contamination, acquired a dreamy and erotic refinement caught from Watteau and Saint-Aubin, and still further aggravated by contact with the nostalgic imagery of Paul Verlaine. Balzac, too, provided numerous motives for his weak but sympathetic pencil, and the actors of the *Comédie Humaine* are presented by him, through the medium of lithography, in an envelopment of warm and over-scented luxury.

At the conclusion of this *villégiature*, Rothenstein, his wife, Conder and I repaired to Paris and spent a week or so lunching and dining in the company of Oscar Wilde, now released from prison and inhabiting a modest hotel on the left bank. I was curious to see this monstrously celebrated person of whom one had heard so much and certainly, when I did, it was reassuring to find his behaviour, as far as I was concerned, to be perfectly correct, friendly and even paternal. Not having been to Oxford, I was unable to speak the peculiar sub-dialect fashionable among his contemporaries, and I could only sit silently and marvel at this genial, sentimental, urbane, but rather portentous personage. After a series of Maraschinos he would be in good form and hold the floor in masterly fashion. It is true his audience was always sufficiently subservient and deferential and responded to his sallies with the dutiful appreciation of a hired *claque*. Conder, alone, behaved at times like a naughty boy, and when he would pour his wine into his soup, drew from the Master the rebuke that 'Vine leaves in the hair was all very well and indeed beautiful, but such childish folly was both tiresome and undecorative.' When Alice Rothenstein, fearful for my reputation, persuaded me to have my hair cut, Oscar, the next day, was very grave and reproachful, and said I might at least have consulted him before taking so important a step. I myself was disappointed to find that he wore his own hair short. Tugging at his dew-lap he would discourse wittily after his manner and, with mild and affectionate regret, recount his recollections of the boyish misadventures of his sons. On the whole I was glad when I could escape from the over-charged ambience of this de-caged and now mane-less lion, and with Conder seek greater ease and comfort in less august company.

I have never been a great Oscar fan though I loved his jokes. I



found *De Profundis* sentimental and false, the *Ballad* second-rate, but *The Importance of Being Ernest* perfect. *The Picture of Dorian Grey* made a strong but unpleasant impression on me when I read it as a youth; later I re-read it and found it a thoroughly amusing thriller. Wilde was a big and good-natured fellow with enormous sense of fun, impeccable bad taste, and a deeply religious apprehension of the Devil. A great man of inaction, he showed sound judgment when, rather than face freedom on a yacht in the company of Frank Harris, he preferred to sit where he was and await the arrival of the police.

One evening at the old Café Procope, long since demolished, somewhat dramatic confrontation took place. Oscar, Conder, and a strange being known as Bibi La Purée had met at this Pre-Revolution establishment. Bibi had been the devoted friend and factotum of Verlaine. Will Rothenstein told me that Bibi, on Verlaine's death, followed the funeral cortege of his master weeping copiously, but consumed by his irresistible passion for umbrellas, returned from the melancholy ceremony, bearing a sheaf of these commodities as his day's pickings. A nocturnal bird, he had the appearance of an undernourished and fugitive Voltaire. I found him greatly to my taste. Enters Robert Sherard, a superb specimen of manhood and a walking testimonial to the virtues of Dr. Tibble's Vi-Cocoa—his favourite restorative. Oscar at once rises and leaves the building. (Evidently he didn't fancy a scene.) Robert Sherard then sits down and treats me to a long diatribe on O.W., whom he had befriended loyally during his trouble and since, only to be rewarded with indifference and even ingratitude. Oscar had said: 'Robert Sherard is impossible, he defends me at the risk of my life!' R.S. offered to present me with the complete works of his former hero, duly inscribed: 'There's not one of them worth a damn.' (He seemed thoroughly disillusioned.) Unwilling to encumber myself with a parcel of rubbish, I did not avail myself of his generosity. We passed an interesting night visiting a series of *boîtes de nuit*, till I and my companion took leave of Sherard, Conder and Bibi at the first pale gleams of a typical Parisian dawn.

Paris then was still French and its manners had not been entirely vitiated by the transatlantic interpenetration. Frenchmen were still virile, and the bistro the resort of honest men.

With Conder and Sherard I once visited Ernest Dowson

Catford, a suburb of London where Sherard's wife kept a bricklayers' lodging house, and had offered asylum to the sick poet. The poor fellow was very dejected indeed and wasn't particularly pleased to see his friends, but I found him *sympatique*. Conder and I decided to stay at Swanage, where a lady, Mrs. Everett, kept a convenient boarding-house. Here Conder did a good deal of his best work, painting out of doors. Being at the seaside it was inevitable that a love-affair should ensue. A charming and talented Irish art-student provided Conder with the requisite opportunity and an engagement followed. When Conder interviewed the young lady's mother to declare his intentions formally, he was met with the objection of a certain disparity of age between the parties concerned, 'In any case,' he was told, 'there need be no hurry! You remember that Jacob waited seven years for Rachel.' 'Yes,' replied Conder, 'but you remember too that Jacob lived to the age of 374!' The marriage never took place. At the same time I myself felt the compulsion of the sea air, for a handsome young Viennese, who in strict incognito served at table, now captured my affections, diverting them for a time from an earlier and what proved to be a more permanent allegiance. Maria Katerina's defences, though aided by a perverse and exasperating tactic, proved in the end to be not insurmountable, and when I left she promised to rejoin me in France, where I had arranged to go with my friend Michel Salaman. My letters, however, were intercepted by Mrs. Everett, who, much to my annoyance, dissuaded the Viennese from carrying out the plan. Perhaps after all she never took me very seriously. Salaman and I spent some months at Le Puy-en-Velay and were joined by the Rothensteins for a while. Will made numerous drawings of the old portions of the town. Pushing south as far as Notre-Dame-des-Neiges we spent the night at the Trappist Monastery, being each accommodated in a cell, and next morning given wine and cheese for breakfast. Rothenstein seemed to think that Huysmans might be there, but we could obtain no information about him. The silent and bearded monks went about their labours in the fields; a lay but uncommunicative brother attended to our needs.

As marriage seemed to necessitate an immediate and regular income I accepted a job which offered itself, and we moved to Liverpool, where for two or three years I taught drawing at a School of Art affiliated to the University College. During this

time I painted several of the leading lights of the college which then was in process of emergence into the present University of Liverpool. It was here I made the acquaintance of John Sampson, Librarian of the College and our foremost Gypsy scholar. We struck up a friendship which, with occasional disturbances, lasted till his death. He introduced me to the Gypsies, and together we made a practice of visiting the tents. Under his tutelage I soon made headway with the English dialect of Romany, and in north Wales made first-hand contact with the tribe of Abram, who have preserved the language in such purity and which Sampson has recorded in his *magnum opus*: '*The Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales*'

## VIRGINIA WOOLF

### DUNCAN GRANT

I FIRST knew Virginia Stephen when she and her brother Adrian took No. 29 Fitzroy Square, soon after her sister Vanessa married Clive Bell. It was a house on the south-west corner of the square with a view of the two fine Adams' façades. It was a derelict square. The houses of the great had gradually decayed and were taken as offices, lodgings, nursing homes and small artisan workshops.

I had taken for a studio two rooms on the second floor of the house on the same side of the square. There was certainly not much gentility left in the district; the only relic of grandeur was a beadle to march round the square and keep order among the children, in a top-hat and a tail-coat piped with red and brass buttons. The Stephens were the only people I remember who had a complete house there; complete with their cook Sophie Farrel, their maid Maud, a front-door bell and a dog, Hans. A close friendship sprang up between Adrian Stephen and myself, and I had only to tap at the window of the ground-floor room to be let in. 'That Mr. Grant gets in everywhere,' Maud once remarked to Virginia. But irregular as my visits were, in a sense they soon became frequent enough to escape notice.

The house was conveniently divided to suit the inhabitants. On the ground floor was Adrian's study lined with books. Behind



was the dining room. The first floor was entirely a drawing room—the room least used in the house. It was a pleasantly proportioned room, with long windows overlooking the square. It had a green carpet, red brocade curtains; a Dutch Portrait of a Lady and Watts' portrait of Sir Leslie Stephen were the only pictures on the walls. In the back part of the room there was an instrument called a Pianola, into which one put rolls of paper punctured by small holes. You bellowed with your feet and Beethoven or Wagner would appear.

Anyone coming into the room might have thought that Adrian was a Paderewski—the effort on the bellows gave him a swaying movement very like that of a great performer, and his hands were hidden.

I do not remember that Virginia ever performed on this instrument, but it must have played a part in her life, for Adrian on coming home from work would play in the empty room by the hour. Entirely empty it nearly always was and kept spotlessly clean.

It was here that Virginia sometimes saw her less intimate friends and it was here that the dog Hans made mess on the hearthrug when Lady Strachey was paying her first visit, and no mention was made of the fact by either lady.

The more lively rooms were Virginia's own workroom above this, and Adrian's downstairs. Her room was full of books untidily arranged and a high table at which she would write standing. The windows on this floor were double. She was very sensitive to sound, and the noise from the mews and street was severe. The time she gave to her writing was two and a half hours in the morning. She never, I believe, wrote for more than this time, but very regularly.

The study on the ground floor had the air of being much lived in. It was to this room that their friends came on Thursday evenings—a continuation of those evenings which began in Gordon Square before Thoby Stephen died and before Vanessa married. It was there that what has since been called 'Bloomsbury' for good or ill came into being.

About ten o'clock in the evening people used to appear and continue to come at intervals till twelve o'clock at night, and it was seldom that the last guest left before two or three in the morning. Whisky, buns and cocoa were the diet, and people

talked to each other. If someone had lit a pipe he would sometime hold out the lighted match to Hans the dog, who would snap at it and put it out. Conversation; that was all. Yet many people made a habit of coming, and few who did so will forget those evenings.

Among those who constantly came in early days were Charles Sanger, Theodore Llewelyn Davies, Desmond Macarthy, Charles Tennyson, Hilton Young (now Lord Kennet), Lytton Strachey.

It was certainly not a 'salon'. Virginia Stephen in those days was not at all the sort of hostess required for such a thing. She appeared very shy and probably was so, and never addressed the company. She would listen to general arguments and occasionally speak, but her conversation was mainly directed to someone next to her. Her brother's Cambridge friends she knew well by the time, but I think there was always something a little aloof and even a little fierce in her manner to most men at the time I am speaking of. To her women friends, especially older women like Miss Pater and Miss Janet Case, who had taught her Greek, she was more open and less reserved. They were alive to her, by remembrance as well as presence, and had already their place in her imagination as belonging to the world she knew and had left—that life with her parents and her half-brothers at Hyde Park Gate. Henceforward she and her brother and sister had tacitly agreed to face life on their own terms.

I do not think that her new existence had 'become alive' to Virginia's imagination in those first years. She gave the impression of being so intensely receptive to any experience new to her, and so intensely interested in facts that she had not come across before that time was necessary to give it a meaning as a whole. It took the years to complete her vision of it.

It is very difficult for one who is no writer to attempt to describe so subtle a thing as the 'feeling' of long ago. But I must make the attempt to explain why it was that the effect of these young people on a contemporary was so remarkable. To begin with they were not Bohemians. The people I had come across before who had cut themselves off from respectable existence had been mainly painters and Bohemians. If the Stephens defied the conventions of their particular class, it was from being intellectually honest.

They had suffered much, had struggled and finally arrived at an attitude of mind which I think had a great influence on the friends.

If it was an influence Virginia Stephen and her sister were unconscious of the fact.

The impression generally given must have been that these two young women were absorbing the ideas of their new Cambridge friends. And of course this was true up to a point. Saxon Sydney Turner, Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, Maynard Keynes, were willing to discuss anything and everything with them or before them. It was a gain all round. What the Cambridge of that time needed was a little feminine society. It was a little arid, and if it took almost everything seriously it had mostly left the Arts out of account. It took some things religiously. 'This is my Bible' was said by one, pointing to the *Principia Ethica*, by G. Moore. This eminent philosopher was certainly the overwhelming influence on these young men. Conversations on the 'Good' and the value of certain states of mind were a frequent subject of discussion; and these Apostolic young men found to their amazement that they could be shocked by the boldness and scepticism of two young women.

To be intimate with Virginia Stephen in those days was not to be on easy terms. Indeed the greater the intimacy the greater the danger—the danger of sudden outbursts of scathing criticism. I have the impression that no one had much encouragement for anything they produced. Nor was it looked for. Nothing was expected save complete frankness (of criticism) and a mutual respect for the point of view of each. To work for immediate success never entered anyone's head, perhaps partly because it seemed out of the question. Virginia Stephen was working on her first novel, *The Voyage Out*. It took seven years to finish. But I do not remember that this was thought to be an out of the way length of time in which to produce a novel.

The inner fierceness of her attitude to which I have already alluded is worth remembering, and will possibly surprise those who only knew her in later life when it seemed to have entirely disappeared or to have found expression in quite other ways.

It then expressed itself sometimes, as I have said, by an appearance of acute shyness. Upon an unforeseen introduction, for instance, there was an expression of blazing defiance, a few carefully chosen banalities, and a feeling of awkwardness. It came from a sort of variant of Cézanne's 'grapin dessous', which made her literally turn tail from misadventure. As when she saw

Mrs. Humphry Ward advancing along a narrow passage in the Louvre and hid herself behind a totally inadequate post.

No one so beautiful and so fierce could give offence except to the very stupid. But she was capable of inspiring feelings of respect in the most philistine.

This shyness or fierceness was a necessary self-defence in her war with the world. The world must, she surmised, accept her on her own terms or not at all.

If these notes have any interest it is because they may to some revive the memory, to others suggest the existence, of that seemingly very different Virginia Woolf known to a variety of people in later years.

Marriage and possibly a growing appreciation of her work had the effect of seeming to make her very much more at ease in the world.

## JOHN ROTHENSTEIN PAINTING IN AMERICA

WE were leaning over the parapet of the Groton Dam, New York, four painters, of whom George Biddle was one, and I. American art was the subject of our conversation. 'It's so vital and abundant,' George Biddle said, 'it could get along without the best American artists'. 'And no doubt the best American artists could manage equally well without American art,' I said, and my observation was approvingly received by all except George Biddle; naturally enough, seeing that they had strong claims to be counted among the best American artists. But their approval mocked me, for as soon as I had spoken I knew George Biddle was right. My remark was based on the arbitrary assumption that quality is at all times and of necessity of greater value than quantity. That masterpieces embody the ultimate values in art George Biddle would not dispute. But the question at issue was not whether a few masterpieces, generally speaking, were more to be desired than a multitude of works of lesser merit, but whether the sudden awakening of an entire, vast people to art as language and a delight, might not produce, ultimately, more masterpieces than the efforts of a handful of specialists, however





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DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION by Grant Wood



*Reproduced by courtesy of 'Eyes on America', and 'The Studio' Limited*

MAIN STREET by Charles Burchfield

highly trained, working in isolation. It was a question, quite simply, whether in certain circumstances success could more readily be achieved by—so to speak—a *levée en masse*—or by a few regiments of mercenaries.

The answer to that question depends on circumstance, and when I say that George Biddle was right I mean that for the United States, to-day, the *levée en masse*—for the present nation-wide participation in the arts in one capacity or another amounts to that—is the more hopeful of the two procedures.

And what an astonishing transformation this nation-wide movement has effected in the space of a few years!

During the late nineteen-twenties I happened to be teaching the history of art in the United States as Assistant Professor successively at the Universities of Kentucky and Pittsburgh. At that time I had little contact with the most active centres of scholarship and connoisseurship, yet I have no reason to doubt that, in respect of the attitude towards the arts which prevailed there, the Blue Grass and Western Pennsylvania were typical of the greater part of the United States. This attitude was based upon the assumption that art was an activity which flourished in the Old World, and one in which Americans participated but rarely, and rather even then because they had gone to the Old World and become acclimatized there, than on account of any native talent. From this followed the other accepted notions, such, for instance, as that a work of art was something to be bought rather than something to be made, and therefore intimately linked with social status; that Americans who painted—unless like Whistler, Mary Cassatt or Sargent they had been acclaimed by Europe—were nothing but eccentric tyros. For a time this attitude deceived me into an acceptance of the assumption that here was a continent where no art flourished. Then one day I came upon a reproduction of a painting, lying on a table in a college library—a small glossy cutting from a magazine. The beauty of it, and the knowledge that here was the work of an unknown master, took away my breath. I scrutinized the mysterious figures of Our Lord and the kneeling Magdalen. Some students came in, and I asked them who the artist was. Not without delay, I learned that he was an American named Ryder, and at once I knew that there must be other American painters, unknown to Europe, for even so personal a vision as Ryder's must spring from a tradition, however

fitful or immature. My 'discovery' of Eakins straightway followed. What a splendid pair of masters! And how dramatically Ryder's humble, halting realization of what 'never was on land or sea', contrasts with Eakins' uncompromising and consummate rendering of the creative and heroic aspects of this world!

In those days I used often, as an Extension Lecturer to the University of Kentucky, to go to colleges and women's clubs in the Blue Grass, and occasionally in the mountains. Sometimes spoke about Ryder and Eakins. My audiences were evidently pleased by the news—for news it was to many of them—that American painters had flourished who had remained in their own country, and whose work merited, nevertheless, the most serious consideration. Yet these audiences also found delicate means of making me aware that since 'art' was understood to be my subject they regarded my eulogies of these two American painters as digressions, needlessly polite.

In Western Pennsylvania interest in the arts was rather livelier and more widespread than in Kentucky. This must have been due to the International Exhibition, held every second year at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, but it was the foreign rather than the American section that drew the crowds and gave the event prestige. It was, I fancy, when I was in Pittsburgh that John Kane was represented in the exhibition for the first time, and I remember listening to the comments of visitors, which for the most part suggested that the inclusion of works by this Pennsylvania primitive was prompted by a bizarre kind of patriotism.

John Kane I used to visit in his room in an ancient, decayed building near the railroad tracks, which, I believe, belonged to a convent. He put me in mind of another old painter, whom I had been privileged to see from time to time in London, Walter Greaves. This former Thames boatman painter (whose boatman father in times long past had rowed Turner on the river) whom Whistler had discovered, exploited and inspired, shared with the Scottish-born, Pittsburgh jack-of-all-trades an uncommon retentive memory and a candour which neither in art nor life permitted anything to be withheld. Both men, at the very close of a lifetime's neglect, were hailed as masters.

Kane's art and character so much delighted me that after leaving Pittsburgh in 1929 I wrote a short account of both, but none of the editors, American or British, to whom I submitted it, were



interested. A few years later a mutual friend wrote to tell me of Kane's death. It was not long after this that in a Bond Street dealer's gallery I came upon a group of Kane's paintings, priced at figures that would have seemed fabulous to the artist, who remained a poor man to the end.

After an absence of ten years I revisited the United States in October 1939, and remained until the beginning of last May. During these months I enjoyed exceptional opportunities for seeing something of the changes which the decade had brought. Their magnitude surprises Americans themselves; their effect on a visitor, even though he had heard reports of them, was inspiring. As recently as 1933 a commission of experts, set up by President Hoover, reported that: 'It must be admitted that for the overwhelming majority of the American people, the fine arts of painting and sculpture, in their non-commercial, non-industrial forms do not exist.' Yet only six years later, the Government regards the fine arts not as luxuries for some men but as necessities for all. President Roosevelt and members of his Administration have shown both eloquence and vision in their treatment of this theme on public occasions; it is not, however, their speeches that have made them unique. To-day tens of thousands of public buildings throughout the country are being enriched by paintings and sculptures. To-morrow the people will have learned from their elected representatives' courage and faith that such enrichment is not less necessary to buildings than sound plumbing.

Some of the manifestations of this altered attitude towards the arts I found extravagant at the time—for example, the remark of an eminent Columbia professor to whom I confided my intention to purchase designs by two American artists, both of them young and unknown, for the Tate Gallery: 'Considering how fine American paintings are,' he said, 'personally I think it a pity that a single example should leave the country.' And the claim made by a critic—his name escapes me—that 'America to-day is developing a school of painting which promises to be the most important movement in the world of art since the Italian Renaissance'. But if want of balance there must be, what lover of the arts does not prefer such exuberant praise to the tepid suspicion which prevails in Europe and prevailed until yesterday in the United States? Praise is the life-blood of artists.

What has brought about, in the space of a few years, this

astonishing transformation? That a great nation so teeming with ideas, charged with so great a variety of emotions should remain indefinitely content to express itself in foreign pictorial idiom was not to be expected. The transformation was therefore bound to take place. But the great depression supplied the necessary occasion. That event was decisive. Before the awakening of the American people from a dream of prosperity without end, their very success had created an emotional climate by which many American artists (among them some of the most gifted) were chilled or sterilized.

Ever since the momentous New York Armory Exhibition of 1912 revealed the splendid and adventurous spirit of French painting to the American public at large, American artists, who had long been drawn towards France, tended in ever growing numbers to make it their place of domicile as well as their spiritual home. And a whole generation of American students flocked to Paris: many remained, and the world witnessed the strange spectacle of a mighty nation at the zenith of its vitality and power struggling for expression in a style of painting language not its own. How strange, how all but perverse they seemed, those refugees from the haunting, moss-draped bayou country of Louisiana, from austere intimate New England, from Virginia and Kentucky with their exotic grace, and from stupendous Manhattan, who had come to Paris to paint, with an infinity of labour dish after dish of apples! Dishes of apples nobody wanted, for the simple reason that these expatriates had come to a country where the art of painting apples had been brought to perfection long ago so that their apples were but shadows of shadows.

Towards the close of the nineteen-twenties the homeland of these expatriates ran into an economic blizzard. It seemed to them at first remote, and later calamitous; but it proved to be neither of these, for out of it came a nation transformed—and a nation that had need of its artists. The rumble of crashing stock markets, the rising tide of unemployment, which for a moment seemed to signify nothing to the life of atelier and boulevard, grew menacing. Then the flow of remitted dollars dwindled; the value of the dollar dwindled also. At last the expatriates were compelled to come home. For the most part they left France with regret in their hearts, for they knew nothing of the high purpose for which Providence had recalled them.

Now that the aims and domiciles of American artists are so entirely altered, those among them who worked abroad are reproached with having wasted their time. The reproach is not warranted. It is nothing more than the thoughtless inversion of the accepted notion of an earlier day that art was an activity best practised away from home. It is my conviction that the splendid achievement of to-day is built upon the solid, the almost too solid, foundations of a deep deposit of laborious, unsmiling 'still lifes', painted years ago in Montparnasse.

The besetting weakness of the American as of the British School of painting during the nineteenth century is rightly held to result from the lack of attention paid to design. Of importance of design the French School on the contrary—though clearly in a state of decline to-day—has shown a constant and conscientious sense. Now although the subjects of the expatriates tended to be trivial and meagre, their contact with French tradition did rescue them from the obliviousness of certain essential facts of picture-making which vitiated the Anglo-Saxon Schools. If an unrelenting critic of the expatriates were to press the question, what did they learn in Paris that Eakins could not have taught them, I could only reply that both American and British artists are readier, as a rule, to learn from foreigners than from their fellow-countrymen. American artists as a whole learned hardly more from Eakins—his marked ability as a teacher notwithstanding—than the British from Constable.

The returned prodigals found their native land changing beneath their gaze, and becoming, to their surprise, a place where as artists they were no longer strangers. The collapse of time-honoured institutions, the pitiful, ominous, standing army of unemployed had banished the old complacency. During the nineteen-thirties a great and legitimate pride in American achievement became tempered by a clearer recognition of the immensity of the obstacles which she had still to overcome. Inequalities of opportunity revealed by the depression aroused the social conscience as never before.

The new national outlook was one which the former expatriates could share. The hearts of many of those who, in their country's years of success had chosen to leave her, went out to her now in her adversity. They knew themselves Americans, and sensed their destiny from then onward to be part of the American destiny.

This new harmony did not come in a day. For a while America distressed and anxious, had little time for artists, either for those who had left her, or those who had stayed at home. So the expatriates at first exchanged garrets in Montparnasse for garrets smaller but more expensive, in Greenwich Village and a score of other accredited artists' haunts. Presently the rising tide of unemployment submerged most of those who depended for their living on the practice of their art and numberless *rentiers* besides. Thus a multitude of painters lacked the means to paint, and a large part of the nation's creative power seemed destined to frustration.

At the eleventh hour salvation came in the guise, unfamiliar to artists, of a series of administrative measures. These were based on the recognition of the right of the citizen to have the beliefs, aspirations, and achievements of his country expressed in pictorial form for all to see; and on the recognition of the value of the artist's power to give popular expression to these beliefs, aspirations, and achievements, and of the right of the artist to a measure of encouragement from the State, similar to that generally extended to the scholar, the scientist and the farmer. It is a melancholy fact that modern democracy, which has to its credit a long and brilliant succession of triumphs in so many spheres of human activity, has as a patron of art, shown less enlightenment, less generosity, less responsibility, than some of the darkest tyrannies of the past. Under democracy art had until then flourished as an esoteric cult, a diversion for the well-to-do, and in general, not even a favourite diversion. (The very wealthy have rarely patronized, in modern times, the finest American artists; their princely generosity towards art museums will long be gratefully remembered.)

President Roosevelt's legislation, which brought into being the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts and the Federal Art Project, is the only attempt by a modern democratic State to assume responsibilities towards the arts on a scale in any way commensurate with its resources. The way was prepared by the depression, the American artists' consequent unemployment and change of heart towards their country, and their imperative need for help, for the most momentous body of art legislation in the history of the western world.

I have ventured to repeat facts with which many readers of this magazine will be familiar, and to insist upon the importance of what has often before been praised because I found, to my



surprise, a disposition on the part of many thoughtful Americans to question not only the first fruits of this body of legislation (with which it is not difficult to find fault) but with its aims. In particular I recall an article attacking both, which appeared last winter in a New York paper of high standing. The writer is an informed and urbane critic to whose views on art a wide public—including artists themselves—gives ready attention. The article's theme, trenchantly expressed, was that the art legislation in question was inspired by political considerations, and that the painting and sculpture commissioned in accordance with it were worthless. In private conversation I often heard similar views expressed. One night at dinner in New York I listened to the doubts of cultivated people as to the desirability of a government's acting as a patron of art. Next day at lunch in Washington I heard a philistine speak glowingly of the people's hunger for art, for the smell of a lot of art, and of the Administration's plans to satisfy that hunger. This philistine was a tough (and highly successful) politician, who had never, I gathered, looked at a picture himself. Yet he had, somehow 'caught on' to a great conception. I thought his enthusiasm contradictory for a moment, then I remembered how many of the early, fervent advocates of popular education in Great Britain had been men of little education themselves. Anyhow, to-day the distinction between 'cultivated' and 'philistine' persons has grown hardly less blurred than that between the political 'left' and 'right'. I hope that men like this tough politician are going to play a larger part in shaping the destiny of American art than the seemingly better qualified persons of whom I have spoken. And I believe they will.

For some years, rumours concerning the art policy of the present Administration had filtered across to England, and were listened to eagerly by those who believed that the arts should play an integral part in national life. So when I revisited the United States I was eager to learn what the Administration hoped to accomplish, the scope of its plans, and how the artists were selected. It was largely with a view to finding answers to these questions that I attended 'The Forty-Eight States Competition', at the Corcoran Gallery, Washington, towards the end of last year. As soon as I saw the exhibits I was ashamed of the intellectual curiosity that had brought me there. At once curiosity was lost in pleasure. Some of the work on view, to be sure, showed

an almost total want of talent, more showed talent of an average kind. Yet, for all that, 'The Forty-Eight States Competition' was one of the most inspiring exhibitions I had seen. What was it that gave to this assembly of studies, mostly by artists whose names were little known outside the confines of their States, and many of them only modestly endowed by nature, this arresting quality? I had regarded art exhibitions as pearl fishers regarding oysters: as things unprofitable in themselves but which might contain jewels. But here in the Corcoran Gallery one was not tempted—to vary the metaphor—to search for the roses among the thorns, because it was evident that here was no ordinary rose bush, that these, indeed, were no ordinary thorns. Its unique quality consisted in its being an integral whole, in spite of being composed of paintings by men and women scattered over every part of an immense sub-continent. Even the least study there, gave utterance, however faltering, to what the best so resoundingly proclaimed: that there was a new spirit abroad in America, a spirit by which artists were also moved and willingly expressed in terms which all could understand. This is not the occasion to speak about that spirit, but not the least remarkable thing about it is the impulse it shows to express itself in painting and sculpture. Every shade of the Anglo-Saxon spirit has been reflected in literature, always adequately, often with transcendent splendour, but in painting and sculpture how rarely and how faintly in comparison! Truly, Crome, Gainsborough, Constable and Turner gave sublime expression to the Anglo-Saxon love of nature, but in what painting or sculpture do we find, in its plenitude, the spirit of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Poe or Whitman? It is not so much that our painters and sculptors have failed to interpret the profoundest intimations of Americans and Englishmen about the world, or of the destiny of our countries as that they have so rarely made the attempt.

It would be absurd to claim success for the artists represented in the 'Forty-Eight States Competition' where Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Lawrence, Whistler, Eakins and Ryder failed, but they are, I believe, attempting to interpret with a more conscious purpose their country's sense of its past, its present and its future.

In writing about the sweeping changes of the past ten years, I have insisted on the significance of the Administration's inspiring

patronage of the arts because this seems to me to be the spring from which flows the extraordinary vitality now animating American art. I can see none other of comparable importance. There is the momentous example of the work carried out in Mexico by Diego Rivera; there is a great and fructifying influx of artists from abroad. There are, to be sure American painters of outstanding talent who have made reputations without the help of Mr. Roosevelt. But which of these stand highest in the esteem of their fellow artists, and which therefore are most likely to emerge as representative figures, it is very difficult to discover. To the question, which I asked most of the artists I met, as to whom they regarded as the six best painters now at work in the United States, I received a baffling variety of answers. Very rarely did any one name recur.

Great local reputations abound; the most diverse traditions flourish side by side yet without contact. There exists no centre, such as London, where all talent has to run the gauntlet before the assembled critical forces of the nation. Artists are widely distributed over an immense country. It is therefore scarcely possible for the visitor to see American painting clearly, or to see it whole, but I will write a few notes about the painters whose work most impressed me.

Of the older men, none seemed to me to equal John Sloan (b. 1871), who is essentially the painter of the low-life of Victorian, down-town New York. Sloan is a vigorous, scintillating realist, who prefers low, silvery tones, a master of atmosphere and gesture. So close is his affinity with Sickert that I asked whether he knew him. 'I've followed Sickert's development for many years,' he said, 'feeling that we saw things rather alike, but we've never met. You see,' to my surprise, he added, 'I've never been abroad'.

Sloan, a fuller-blooded, less capricious, less sardonic Sickert, belongs to the European tradition, but Charles Burchfield (b. 1893) is unmistakably an American. The art of this remarkable painter is dominated by his passionate attachment to the Ohio countryside where he was born. Frame houses in the rain, tree-margined pools at night, copses and cornfields under the fiery sun he puts swiftly upon paper or canvas, but he subjects them to the same minute and tender scrutiny as the portrait painter subjects the faces that most inspire him. Burchfield is a more dynamic, more various John Nash.

There is no British painter to whom John Carroll (b. 1892) can be compared. This painter once said of the Middle-Western Realist School (of which Grant Wood (b. 1892), Thomas Benton (b. 1889) and J. S. Curry (b. 1897) are the leading figures, and which has a larger following than any other), 'It gives us a view of American life through a knothole in a backhouse door'. Nothing, certainly, could be more remote from the robustly if coarsely conceived encomiums and the affectionate satires on life in Kansas and Missouri than Carroll's ethereal but passionate young girls, who seem rather to have been breathed on to the canvas than drawn or painted—white figures that haunt the memory like people met in dreams.

As Wood, Benton, and Curry take the rural Middle West as their province, Reginald Marsh (b. 1898) takes the teeming various life of Manhattan. Aesthetically Marsh is more ambitious than any of the Middle-Western Painters. Although his work is no less 'popular' than theirs, he is not content with their generalizations and their summary forms. Whether his subject is chorus girls in a 'burlesque', or hobos outside a doss-house, or even a smoke-wreathed locomotive, he shows his awareness of a great tradition of painting.

Paul Cadmus (b. 1904) is another painter of popular New York life, his subjects are toughly vicious where Marsh's are gay or tragic, and his design and texture are architectural and stony where Marsh's are fluid.

*The Fleet's In*, a painting of sailors disporting themselves ashore gave him a place among serious painters—and made him notorious. Admiral Hugh Rodman demanded that it should be destroyed. Cadmus has a satanic but compelling vision.

All the above-mentioned painters have established reputations but I was particularly impressed by the mastery of one entirely unknown painter, a very young man named Symeon Shimin who is engaged upon a wall painting in the Justice Department Building, in Washington. In this decoration ardent feeling is given expression in a large and noble design. It is the work of an artist with an extraordinary understanding of the potentialities of wall painting.

These six painters have, stylistically, almost nothing in common. A specifically American style has not yet been evolved. One of the most interesting consequences of the Administration's policy



of art patronage is likely to be the evolution, out of what is at present chaos highly charged with life, of a coherent, continental style. Whether it will call great masters into being is another question. It seems likely that in the arts as in other spheres of creation, the American genius, like the mediæval genius, is adapted rather to tremendous collective achievements than to the studied expression of the individual spirit.

ANTONIA WHITE

## THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

ON the stone floor inlaid with coats of arms, only a few couples were dancing, yet the hall was filled with the lispings of feet. The music was as insistent as the band striking up when a man falls from a trapeze.

'Hardly anyone is dancing,' said Charlotte to the unknown man beside her, 'yet whenever I put out my hand, I touch someone'. But the stranger seemed not to have heard her. All his attention was taken up with the piece of string which he was twisting into elaborate bends. At first she was hurt because he was ignoring her. Then she realized that he was telling her something by means of the string. She tried to read words in the loops and twists. He tied a slip-knot and drew the noose over one finger. 'Is that ——?' she began, and checked herself. For she had made an absurd mistake. The man beside her was not a stranger, but her husband, Richard.

And was she after all at Faringay? There was something not quite right about the hall. Looking up, she read the motto on one of the dark arches, 'Ne crede Byron'. The arch: the gilt letters were just as she remembered them, but the words should have been 'Labor ipse Voluptas'.

She must keep quiet, ask no questions, draw attention to nothing, least of all to herself. Now the hall was entirely empty of dancers. But though the band brayed like a steam organ, she could still hear the whispering feet. There was no longer anyone near her, but a woman laughed close by her ear and an invisible skirt brushed her knee.

With every second the danger was growing. Looking for a way of escape, Charlotte noticed a door she had never seen before. Printed on it in large Gothic letters was the word MURDER.

Now she knew that she could not be too careful. She must act very quietly, very normally. She walked over towards the buffet, feeling her way through the unseen dancers. They would not make room for her but pressed against her, jostling and holding her back. She dared not wince or cry out though she could feel hands passing up and down her spine, pinching her arms, stroking her throat. An invisible man embraced her, pushing his thighs against hers. A finger was thrust in her eye. A woman's bracelet caught in her hair. But, keeping back her terror, she went on slowly making her way through the crowd of laughing enemies.

By the buffet the space was clear. The man in the white cap carving a ham with a long thin knife raised his head and looked at her with eyes bolting from a doll's face. He leant over the table and ran the knife blade caressingly down her arm. 'I know,' he whispered. It had come. She must get out. In a second it would be too late.

'Richard! Richard! Richard!' she screamed from bursting lungs.

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The cry Charlotte heard as she broke through to the safer world was the thinnest wail, less audible than the pounding of her heart. She put out her hand to touch Richard and her knuckles encountered only wood. She seemed to be lying in a coffin that heaved under her with a shuddering creak. Was she awake or had she struggled out of one nightmare into another? She forced her eyes wide open and took deep gasps of breath. The air, smelling of oil and paint, was suffocating but it was the air of the tangible world. Groping along the ledge she found a switch and turned on the dim cabin light.

'Richard,' she said.

There was no answer.

Leaning over the edge of the bunk, she listened for his breathing. She heard nothing but the straining creak of the ship and the crash of the waves against the porthole. His dressing gown swung towards her from the opposite wall and stayed suspended at a wide angle till the wall swung forward to meet it. The wall itself

swerved from the straight and the dressing-gown lapsed back on to it. She stared at it as it swayed, hung suspended and dropped until she began to feel its sickening rhythm behind her eyes and had to look away.

At last she made herself climb down and peer into the lower bunk. The sheets were folded with the precision of a hospital bed. On the pillow lay nothing but Richard's watch. She picked it up, looked at the time, and crouched back on the bunk, dangling the watch by its strap. It was half-past one; more than two hours since he had kissed her good-night and gone up on deck. Why had he left her for so long?

Ever since she had begun, a few months before, to have oppressive dreams, she counted on finding him near her when she fought out of them, always calling his name. He had learnt to slip an arm round her, even to mutter reassuring words, without waking from his sleep. Now that he was not there when she needed him such bitterness rose up in her that she could feel an acrid taste in her mouth.

The next lurch of the narrow cabin flung his dressing-gown against her knee. Snatching it from the hook, she huddled into it, meaning to go up on deck and find him. But she felt sick. Her knees bent under her and she dropped back, stooping, on the bunk.

The cabin was growing smaller, hotter, more imprisoning every minute. She seemed to have swollen to enormous size. The heavy man's dressing-gown was stifling her but she could not make the effort to take it off. Her skin prickled as if hairs were starting out of it. The bitterness vanished in the beginning of a terror worse than the nightmare, the waking terror from which there was no escape. She could neither bear to be alone in this dim, lurching cupboard nor get up strength to burst open the door. With eyes stiffening in their sockets, she could only crouch there, gripping the watch-strap as if it were a life-line.

Trying to keep the fear from closing in on her, she focussed all her mind on the watch. To her it was part of Richard's body. The silver back was stained from four years contact with his flesh. It had marked him too, printing its shape in a white fether on his wrist. Night after night the beat of its tiny metal pulse had sounded like a second heart, a fraction of him that remained awake while he slept. It had become so intimately his that, fingering it in his

absence, she seemed to be touching something to which she had no right.

She had not held it in her hand since she had taken it shining from its case and given it him the night before they were married! The next morning, just as she was leaving her room to go across to the church where his father was waiting to marry them, he had run into her, breathless and laughing.

'My watch, Charlotte! I can't be married without my watch! I've raced back from the altar for it.'

She remembered how he looked, bright-eyed and ruddy from the November wind, his hair sleeked, a flower in his coat—the picture of a bridegroom.

But try as she would to hold the image, the tide of panic went on rising, sweeping her back from the real world. The watch slipped to the floor. She dropped back on the bunk with closed eyes and gasping mouth like a drowning woman beaten off from a lifeboat.

'Charlotte!'

His voice called her back. It sounded in the core of her ear, yet it seemed to come from another dimension like the voice of the nurse to which one wakes after chloroform. She forced up her eyelids and looked at him. He filled the cabin, standing over her in his loose oilskin coat.

'Charlotte, dear, are you awake or asleep?'

With a huge effort she made herself open her mouth and speak, only to say in a dry whisper:

'Your watch. On the floor. Don't tread on it.'

He picked up the watch. His face, as it stooped to the level of hers, still glistened with spray, and his hair was damp and ruffled.

'What is the matter, Charlotte? Are you ill?'

'I had a bad dream,' she said, staring past him.

'And I wasn't there. I'm sorry.'

'What does it matter?'

'Oh, Charlotte, not that voice. And why look at me as if I were an enemy?'

'Not an enemy. A stranger,' she said wearily.

'I shouldn't have stayed away so long.'

There was regret in his tone, not the mechanical gentleness she had lately come to expect. It softened the shell of her hatred. She



sat up and let him put his arm round her shoulder. Sitting side by side, their heads leaning together, their foreheads drooped, they seemed to be mourning a common loss.

‘What was your dream, Charlotte?’

‘I woke before it became too bad. It was about Faringay.’

‘You are haunted by that house. Why do you keep dreaming about the past?’

‘I can’t inhabit the present any more.’

His arm tightened as the ship gave a lurch.

‘We shouldn’t be talking so late. We may be keeping people awake in the next cabin.’

She drew away from him in anger. Then she laughed.

‘You inhabit the present all right.’

‘It makes you so angry that I do. Yet one of us must.’

‘Perhaps one is enough,’ she said almost gaily.

He stood up and tried gently to draw her to her feet. But she shook her head and settled back on the bunk. He loomed above her, balancing on his strong legs, adjusting them to the movement of the ship.

‘Don’t you ever have dreams, Richard?’

‘Mine don’t make stories like yours.’

‘Do you never have a dream that seems more true than life? That shows you something you never knew before—or were afraid to know?’

He began to wind his watch.

‘Sometimes, perhaps.’

‘You don’t tell me them.’

She glanced up and saw his face set and heavy. In the dim light the shadows under his eyes were dark as bruises. She knew he was tired out but she hardened to him.

‘I don’t always dream of the past, Richard.’

He went on turning the knob of his watch.

‘You’ll break the mainspring,’ she cried in a burst of rage. Then, bitterly, ‘I forgot. You’d never ill-treat a piece of *machinery*, would you?’

He laid the watch down carefully and took her by the wrist, pressing his fingers on it as if feeling her pulse.

‘Charlotte!’ he said quietly and urgently, ‘Charlotte! You must get some sleep now.’

He pulled her up against the dead weight of her resistance.

'I'll help you into your bunk.'

'No. I feel sick.'

'You'll be better lying flat. It's beginning to calm down. Up on deck I could hardly keep my legs.'

'Then why did you stay so long?'

He kissed her forehead.

'Up you go. Carefully.'

As she scrambled up clumsily, a sudden roll shot her forehead against an iron staple and Richard cried out.

'You needn't pity me about physical pain,' she said. 'It's a relief.'

'You don't want that heavy old dressing-gown. You'll be far too hot.'

She took it off and let it fall.

'I don't remember putting it on. I must be a little crazy.'

He smoothed her pillow, pulled the harsh sheets over her and putting back her tangled hair, began to stroke her forehead. For a minute she lay with closed eyes, not resisting him. A tear oozed under her eyelid and crawled down her temple.

'Will you sleep now?' he said softly.

Her eyes sprang open.

'You say I always dream of the past. What about my other dream? The one about your leaving me?'

'You've dreamt that ever since we married, haven't you?' he said in his same soft voice, still stroking her head. She jerked it away from his touch.

'I shall go on dreaming it. Until it comes true.'

'Has it ever been near coming true?'

'How should I know?' She closed her eyes once more. A wave exploded with a gentle crash against the porthole.

'If only we could open it and get some air,' said Richard.

Though Charlotte had withdrawn too far into herself to care about the heat or the reek of oil, she knew how they must sicken his wind-freshened senses. Yet she beat her fist against the ledge of the bunk, crying:

'You mean I am stifling you. Go on. Say it. Say it.'

'I will say nothing of the kind,' he whispered in patient fury. She bared her teeth and tried to strike him, but he leaned over her pinioning her shoulders like a lover or a murderer. She lay helpless for a moment, gasping with anger. Then suddenly she smiled.

'Why do I have to behave like this? Why can't you stop me?' He smiled too and shook his head.

'Let me go now,' she said, speaking for the first time in her normal voice. 'You needn't hold me down. I am not dangerous.'

He took his hands from her shoulders and began to stroke her arm as if he were expertly and mechanically stroking an animal.

'I know,' he said.

She lay with closed eyes, quiet but unappeased. There was something she wanted to tell him, something urgent which kept flitting just out of reach of her thought like a forgotten name. He kissed her lightly and began, quietly as a thief, to lower himself into his own bunk. When she remembered what she had been groping for and softly called his name, he did not answer.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Their bedroom in the Hotel Berrichon was square and low-ceilinged, with a floor of red tiles arranged in a honeycomb pattern. Stiff yellow lace curtains were looped back from the window that looked out over the whole expanse of the Baie de la Fresnaye. Madame Berrichon leered at Richard and Charlotte as she patted the red eiderdown of the enormous bed.

'You will hardly find a bed so comfortable in the whole of Brittany. My neighbours are satisfied with the old-fashioned lits clos—mere cupboards. But I am from Paris. I am civilized. I do not look on a bed as something in which one huddles oneself to sleep like an animal. In Paris we say that the bed is the battlefield of love.'

'Indeed,' said Richard, politely. Charlotte turned away with a sigh of exasperation and began to pour water from the tiny cracked pitcher into the basin.

'Madame is annoyed?' said Madame Berrichon, in her hoarse purring contralto. 'One does not say such things to English ladies? Forgive me. I am a person of impulses. I do not weigh my words.'

'Are we the only people staying here?' asked Richard.

'Yes, Monsieur. It is early in the season. And in any case few people care for a place so remote. Only those who wish to be alone with nature—or painters—or ——' she lowered her heavy wrinkled lids, 'lovers'.

'We only found it by accident,' Richard said, with an uneasy glance at Charlotte's back. 'We set out from St. Malo this morning and we've been driving all day. My wife is very tired.'

'Believe me, it was no accident,' said Madame Berrichon. She faced him squarely, a solid shapeless figure in her dark shawl and black calico skirt. A shaft from the setting sun struck her face like limelight, showing up the black down on her upper lip and the open pores of her yellow skin. 'Nothing happens by accident in this life. I had an intuition that you would come—so strong that I sent my husband into Matignon to buy langoustes and other good things. He will tell you my intuitions are always justified.'

'I am sure they are, Madame,' said Richard, meeting her eyes with a stare of polite impertinence.

'You laugh. You think I am a foolish old woman,' she said with dignity. 'It is true I do not concoct verses, only good dishes. But at heart, Monsieur, I am a poet. And whether you believe me or not, I am in touch with the most subtle forces of nature. I know by a certainty I cannot describe—a magnetic current in my blood perhaps—that you were both sent here for a purpose. And if you do not know it, Madame your wife knows it, though she pretends not to listen to me.'

Charlotte did not speak or turn round until Madame Berrichon had glided out of the room, moving heavily yet swiftly over the tiles in her felt slippers.

'She's right. We can't get away even if we want to. She's a spider—a witch.'

'Well, she's got an ideal web or castle. It's an old sea-mill she told me. Built right out into an arm of the bay. When the tide's up, there's water on three sides of the house.'

'In fact we are really prisoners,' said Charlotte.

'You forget there's a fourth side. Stop thinking about Madame Berrichon and come and look out of the window.'

'I'm frightened of that old woman,' said Charlotte, moving slowly up to where Richard stood by the window.

'You should paint her and get her out of your system. You could do a wonderful portrait of her—a cross between a Balzac concierge and the Delphic sibyl.'

'I shall never paint again,' said Charlotte gloomily. 'I can't see outside things any more. Only beastly things in my own mind.'

He drew her arm through his with a brotherly gesture.



'All the same, come and look out of the window.'

They leant together on the low narrow sill.

'You could dive straight out of the window into the sea,' she said.

'You'd better not try. See those dark patches under the surface? Rocks—jagged rocks too. You wouldn't have a chance.'

'What's happened to the sun? A few minutes ago there was a blazing sunset. Now look.'

The sky was overdrawn with fine cloud like a fog in the upper air. After the windless heat of the day, a breeze sprang up from nowhere, fanning gusts of invisible rain as fine as dust in their parched faces.

'Perhaps the wind and the rain come up with the tide,' said Richard. 'Can't you feel it's only on the surface? Underneath the air is still as hot and solid as ever. You can almost see the rain turning into steam.'

'How deep is the water?'

'Twenty or thirty feet I should say. Probably we're left high and dry when the tide goes out. Just rocks and mud.'

'What are those birds, Richard? The white ones. They're not ordinary gulls.'

Between the grey sky and the olive green sea white birds skimmed to and fro, a few feet above the surface, their black heads bent towards the water. Every now and then they dropped like stones into the sea, then flashed up again in an arrowy curve. Richard waited till one settled on an old boat moored to a ring in the wall.

'Look! do you see his forked tail? They're sea swallows: you can't see the fork when they fly—they move so fast—the feathers all whirl together.'

'Like spun glass: like the birds with spun glass tails we had on the Christmas tree.'

For a moment Charlotte forgot everything in the pleasure of watching the shooting, diving swallows. Then she turned from the window with a sigh.

'I wish I were a bird. Or even a rock or a patch of seaweed. Anything—anything but a human being.'

She went to the basin and began to wash her hands. Richard threw himself on the bed.

'Is that water warm?'

'No. It's icy—like mountain water.'

He yawned. 'Then I can't shave. You'll have to put up with me with a beard.'

'You can't look worse than I do,' said Charlotte, peering at herself in a greenish speckled mirror. Suddenly she turned and faced him.

'Richard, why didn't you tell me?'

'Tell you what?' he said, in a voice lazy, yet guarded.

'That I've suddenly aged ten years.'

'Don't talk nonsense.'

'You're not looking at me.'

'I don't have to. There's nothing the matter with your face. It's that absurd glass.'

'The glass can't give me those lines. Or those shadows under my eyes.'

'Then it's the way the light falls. Stop being morbid.'

Her face was strained and searching.

'Richard! seriously, I *do* look terrible, don't I?'

He smiled at the ceiling.

'Of course you look a little tired. Who wouldn't, after that night on the boat and driving all day in the sun and dust. Two nights' rest and you'll look wonderful.'

She turned her back on him again, fiercely dragging a comb through her soft fair hair that had gone limp from the heat.

'I hate my face,' she muttered: 'hate it! hate it! hate it!'

'Well, I don't,' he said good-humouredly. He swung himself off the bed and stood up, stretching his firm handsome brown arms. 'Come down and have a drink. We both need one.'

The dining room was large and dim, lit only by three small windows on the landward side. It was paved with the same dull red honeycomb tiles as the bedroom and furnished only with two dark presses and a dozen tables covered with red and white oil-cloth. At the far end, like a huge well-head filled with stones, the shaft which had once held the hoppers of the mill thrust up through the floor. Underneath, though muffled by the stones, the tide could be heard gurgling in the empty shaft.

They sat down at the only table that was laid. Through the window they could see a small, dusty courtyard with a battered table, a few iron chairs, and a fig tree. A yellow mongrel was asleep on one of the chairs; at the table sat Monsieur Berrichon,

wizened little man in a beret and a faded blue blouse, sipping a glass of wine, round which the wasps hovered and buzzed.

Beside Charlotte's plate lay a passion-flower, a star of thick green-white petals with a fringe of blue rays. From the centre of the star four dark stamens stood up, lined with bright yellow pollen and three curious bosses like nail heads. She picked it up and sniffed its strong fleshy scent.

'How did this come here? It couldn't be you, Richard?'

He smiled and shook his head.

Madame Berrichon's felt slippers shuffled on the tiles behind her. Charlotte dropped the flower and turned to find the old woman at her elbow, holding out in both hands an enormous knobbed red sea-spider. The creature's body was larger than a crab; it's long spiky arms waved viciously and helplessly trying to clutch the black shawl.

'You see, Madame? I could not resist proving to you that we expected you. To-night I can only give you a simple meal—but to-morrow, a little feast.'

Charlotte drew back from the waving, clutching tentacles.

'Aha! you are nervous? He is a wicked fellow, no? He would like to crush your hand with those pincers—but we are Christians, are we not? We repay evil with good. I have the water already boiling in my kitchen to give him a nice hot bath.'

'Please take it away,' said Charlotte, shuddering.

'Madame is too sensitive,' said Madame Berrichon, winking at Richard. 'I sympathize. I am sensitive myself—to a degree you would not understand. But one must be a realist too. Providence has arranged that many things should only be good and useful when they are dead.'

She retreated slowly to the kitchen, still talking half-threateningly, half amorously to the sea-spider.

'Do you think it was she who put the passion-flower there?' asked Charlotte, when the kitchen door closed behind Madame Berrichon.

'She's quite capable of it.'

Charlotte pushed the flower away from her.

Louison, Madame's rosy-cheeked, eighteen-year-old niece, in her blue apron and sabots, trotted in with their soup. She glanced at the passion-flower and flushed.

'Madame is offended that I put this flower on the table?'

'Oh, was it you, Louison?' Charlotte drew it back to her. 'No, I love it. I was showing it to my husband.'

She felt herself blushing in her turn.

'But you see, Louison, I can't wear it, I haven't a pin.'

The girl took a pin from her apron and fastened the flower to Charlotte's dress. They both smiled.

'There, Madame. Now you look like a bride.'

Blushing again and glancing at Richard under her fingers, Louison picked up her tray and trotted off again, her sabots pattering like hooves on the tiles.

'There—you see, said Richard triumphantly. 'It's not all black magic here.'

Charlotte fingered the flower, feeling suddenly old and exhausted.

'She's charming. All the same, it's a little ironical to be treated like a bride.'

As she drooped, Richard seemed to revive. His eyes widened and shone as he filled their glasses with the cheap red wine.

'Drink up,' he said, looking aggressively young and healthy. 'Here's to your getting better.'

Charlotte drank too.

'A thoroughly sensible, practical wish. If Louison heard it, that would be the end of her honeymoon illusions.'

'Charlotte, you know as well as I do that nothing can go right for us till you're cured.'

'Cured of what? There's nothing the matter with me.'

'I wish that were true.'

'Then act as if it were,' she said recklessly. 'You treat me as if I were sick or mad, and I become sick and mad. It's your fault.'

He opened his mouth as if he were going to speak. Instead, he finished his glass and filled it up again.

'Perhaps the only thing that's really wrong with us, Charlotte is that we don't drink enough.'

'Maybe it's as simple as that. You always used to say you hated drink.'

'I've said a lot of idiotic things.'

Charlotte stared at him. His face, which she was accustomed to seeing gentle, controlled, almost too anxious to please, looked defiant, even a little dissolute.

'Richard, you're different in some way.'



'Well, shouldn't one be different on a holiday? Or perhaps you haven't seen me for so long you've forgotten what I'm like?'

'Nearly six weeks. We've never been apart so long before.'

'No.'

'It's supposed to be a good thing for people who are married, isn't it?'

For no reason—or perhaps because of the wine—she suddenly began to feel confident, almost exultant.

'I'm sure it's an *excellent* thing,' she said emphatically.

'Is it?' He sipped his drink, frowning.

'I've been such a *fool*, Richard.' She took a deep gulp of the harsh wine. 'Working myself up into such a state over nothing. But I can be different, too, you'll see.'

'You couldn't help being ill.'

It was again the voice she dreaded; gentle, reasonable, placating. But she could ignore it.

'I'm not ill, I tell you. I've just been giving way to myself. Illusion, nothing but illusion. But everything's going to be all right now. Don't I look different already?'

She smiled theatrically, feeling the flesh stretched and tingling over her cheekbones.

'You look splendid. All the same, you must take things quietly for a bit.'

She made a face.

'You're worse than the doctors.'

'You always rush things so. I get giddy trying to keep up with you.'

'I'd like to get the car out and drive for miles. Let's get away from the old witch and her mill.'

'Wait until to-morrow. You don't know how tired you are.'

She put down her glass and sighed.

'It's no good. I believe you want to depress me. You want me to be wretched. So that everyone can pity you and say what a wonderful husband you are to that tiresome woman.'

'Don't talk nonsense,' he said; gently.

'We're never in the same mood at the same moment. Why is it? A moment ago, you were gay and I felt flat. Now I'm gay, and you're wilting before my eyes; is it the same with all married people.'

'I don't know: I daresay.' He lit a cigarette. 'Is there anything you'd like to do?'

She smoked for a minute or two, greedily and mechanically, scattering ash on the oilcloth.

'No, nothing. You make me feel there's no point in doing anything.'

'I'm not much good to you, am I, Charlotte?'

He swept up the ash she had dropped into a neat little heap.

'You're too good, that's just the trouble. Too patient, too considerate. Everything I do irritates you; even the way I smoke a cigarette.'

'Oh, I can put up with that,' he laughed. 'My tidiness is a vice: something you have to put up with.'

'If you only had one grain of viciousness or disorderliness.'

He blew the little heap of ashes on to the floor.

'You know me through and through, don't you? No wonder you find me so dull.'

'I don't know you,' she said thoughtfully. 'I only know what you say and do.'

'Isn't that enough? The trouble is I'm too simple for you.'

'You're not simple: you're not simple at all,' she sighed. 'Or am I the only woman incapable of understanding you?'

'You've such an itch for understanding things, haven't you? Why can't you accept me as I am?'

'I do more than accept you, she said quietly, 'I love you.'

He looked down, avoiding her eyes, his face heavy and clouded.

'Yes. I suppose you feel that is more.'

Her throat went dry.

'You don't want to love me. Is that it? Does that mean——?'

He would not let her finish. 'Don't let's discuss what words mean. I tell you we won't get anywhere with words.'

'Why not, with the right words?' she insisted obstinately.

He jerked his head like a horse on a too-short rein.

'I tell you I haven't your idolatrous respect for words.'

'Yet you're so careful with them. You never exaggerate as do. Never say more than you mean.'

He smiled. She noticed again how tight-lipped and secret his mouth was in contrast to the almost aggressive frankness of the

eyes. The lips always looked bruised and chafed as if they were made of older, more worn material than the fresh skin of his face.

'I expect it's just part of the tidiness that infuriates you so.'

'At any rate you're honest. I cling to that.'

'Poor Charlotte. It's a negative thing to cling to.'

'It's enough,' she boasted, knowing that she lied.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charlotte lay back in the great bed watching Richard moving about the room, unpacking her suitcase and folding her clothes.

'Why don't you let me do anything for myself to-night?' she said.

'You're tired.'

'But it could all wait till to-morrow.'

He smiled and went on inexorably arranging everything in perfect order. When everything was in place, he spread his heavy dressing-gown over her feet.

'You'll be cold in that great icy bed.'

'But aren't you coming to bed yourself?'

'Very soon. I'm going to take a turn outside first.'

Her face stiffened with disappointment as she watched him slipping a jacket over his short-sleeved shirt.

'Just as you like,' she said listlessly.

'Don't be angry, Charlotte. You know what a fool I am about strange places. I can't settle down till I've got my bearings.'

She managed to smile.

'Then of course you must go.'

'You can be an angel when you want to.'

She laughed, pleased at having controlled herself.

'You're thinking, why can't I always be?'

'Yes, why can't you?' he mocked.

'I'll tell you,' she said, sliding her fingers under the cuff of his jacket and stroking his bare wrist. 'It wears one down, being married to a man who always gives such excellent reasons for everything he does.'

He kissed her hand, disengaged himself gently and went out, closing the door stealthily as if she were already asleep.

But she was no longer sleepy. Fighting down an impulse to call him back, she sat up in bed, clenching her hands round her knees and staring in front of her. Because it was not yet quite dark

outside, she felt like a child sent to bed for punishment. She got up and padded round the room; the cold slippery tiles were ice to her bare feet. The mantelpiece distracted her for a few minutes with its load of photographs, oleographs of the Sacred Heart and the Little Flower, black-framed memorial cards, and brass vases filled with immortelles, all set out with precision like the ornaments of an altar on a starched cloth edged with crochet lace. She examined the photographs with interest, recognizing Madame in a wedding group, Louison in the long white dress and veil of a First Communicant, Monsieur Berrichon, twenty years younger, in an ill-fitting army uniform. But these were quickly exhausted. How was she to kill time till Richard came back? She could not lie in the cold bed staring and thinking. In the last months she had become afraid to think. Her very thoughts were tarnished. They split and unravelled into meaningless ends. Often she believed she was going insane. Something inside her seemed to have died and to be filling her mind, even her body, with corruption. Now it was as if she had accidentally overheard a terrible secret and that everything she did or thought was an attempt to stop her ears and forget. At other times she was like a person who must guess an impossible riddle on pain of death and who has only a few hours left in which to find the answer. Outwardly her life went on as before, except that for some months she had been growing languid, irritable and prone to dreams which oppressed her for days.

She had come away for this holiday determined to shake off the shadow. With all his vigorous sanity, Richard himself had lately begun to look moody and careworn. She guessed it was for his sake as much as hers that he had made her give up work for a time and go away alone to the country. It had been dull misery being away from him, yet now that she saw him again she felt more shut away than ever, as a drowning man feels his isolation more bitterly when he can see people walking on the shore. There were moments when she hated him, but they were nothing to the loathing she felt for herself. Yet even her self-hatred was not pure; it had an element of gloating in it; a strain of vile pleasure, as well as disgust.

To-night, she told herself, she would not give way to it. Already she could feel herself slipping. When Richard came back there must not be a repetition of the night on the boat. What



could she do to pass the time in a sane, normal way until she felt safe enough to put out the light? She remembered that there was a detective story in the pocket of the coat Richard had worn on the journey. She opened the door of the cupboard and saw the coat hanging inside. The green and white cover of the book showed over the top of the pocket. As she pulled it out a letter fell out with it. It was a thick letter in a blue envelope, unopened. She picked it up and stared at it, for she knew the writing. Her immediate thought was 'This is really meant for me.' The conviction was so strong that she was on the point of opening it though it was clearly addressed to 'Richard Crane.' She glared again at the envelope as if by doing so she could change what was written on it. Then she saw it was not addressed to their London house, but to a poste restante near Waterloo. The shock was so great that she felt nothing but a mild exhilaration. The exhilaration had nothing to do with her mind, which remained perfectly blank; it was altogether physical, as if she had drunk something warm and stimulating.

There was a knock at the door. Thinking it was Richard, she slipped the letter into the coat pocket and darted back into bed, pulling the sheets up to her chin. She could feel that her eyes were shining and her face set in a mask of bright expectancy as she called out 'Come in.'

It was Madame Berrichon, carrying a steaming glass on a saucer with the air of a priestess carrying a sacred vessel.

'I had a little conversation with Monsieur, your husband,' she said, as she majestically approached the bed. 'It appears you have been indisposed, Madame, and have bad nights. I have taken the liberty of bringing you something to make you sleep.'

A thought flashed up in Charlotte's mind; a thought so fantastic that she did not attempt to brush it away. 'He has sent this woman to poison me.'

Out loud she said politely: 'It is kind of you, Madame, but drugs don't have the effect on me. I sleep better without them.'

'This is no drug, Madame. I myself abominate drugs. It is a tisane made of wholesome natural substances, a distillation of passion-flowers, to be exact.'

She glanced at the passion-flower, wilting in a glass on the chest-of-drawers.

'A charming flower, no? Alive it gives us pleasure; dead it gives us peace.'

'My husband made a mistake Madame Berrichon. There is nothing the matter with me.'

Madame Berrichon stooped and brought her face close to Charlotte's, fixing her with huge eyes, the colour of black coffee.

'I do not need to be told you are ill,' she said, in her hoarse purr. 'I do not judge as doctors. I judge from deeper sources. And I tell you are not only ill, but in grave danger.'

'Nonsense,' said Charlotte, wishing she could laugh, yet feeling her throat contract. 'You are trying to frighten me. Why?'

'Certainly not, Madame. I am speaking only for your good. How do I know? Because Providence has given me a nature of extraordinary sensibility. And I pay a price for it. When others suffer, I suffer in every fibre of my being. To-night you will sleep, but I, I shall not close my eyes.'

'You are too sensitive, Madame' said Charlotte coldly, remembering the sea-spider.

'Sensitive, Madame, that is too banal a word. Good Catholic as I am, I dare not go to Mass. The chanting disturbs my nerves too much.' She turned up her eyes till only half the iris showed in the blood-shot yellowish whites. 'Believe me, Madame, I have only to see my Piboulette with her ducklings, to think of my dog Nanasse, to weep like a child.'

Madame Berrichon brought her eyes into focus again and thrust the glass into Charlotte's limp hand.

'You must drink, Madame. Before it gets cold.'

Powerless, only wanting to be rid of the woman, Charlotte took a sip of a hot liquid, bitter as alum.

Madame Berrichon watched her greedily, anchoring her hands to her solid hips.

'A trifle bitter? There are many bitter things in life as you, Madame, are still too young to know. But this bitterness brings sweetness. When you have drained every drop—piff, paff—you will be in the arms of Morpheus. So deeply asleep that your charming husband on his return might suppose you dead. So, another little, little sip.'

On a sudden impulsion Charlotte launched the glass through the open window. It fell with a faint splash into the sea.

'Softly, Madame,' said the woman without moving. She gave

an imperturbable, pitying leer. 'You see, I am not angry. With hysterics, one must be patient.'

'I am not an hysteric,' Charlotte muttered between her teeth.

'Quite so, quite so, my poor little lady,' the other purred. 'What more natural? So handsome a husband—of course one would not wish him to find one asleep. So very sound asleep too.'

Charlotte felt locked as if in one of her nightmares. She bit her lips so as not to scream for Richard. She looked wildly round the room, staring imploringly at each object he had so carefully arranged, his brushes, a jar of brilliantine, her own powder bowl, as if they could exorcize this presence. But implacably her eyes were drawn back to Madame Berrichon's face.

'He is late, is he not, the charming husband?' said Madame Berrichon, moving away very slowly but still fixing her with the obscene eyes of a witch and a midwife.

She did not speak again until she reached the door.

'Believe me, Madame, I do not hold your ingratitude against you. You are not responsible for your actions. I have done what I could. You prefer to reject it. I hope you will not suffer for it.'

She lingered a moment in the open door, like an actress leaving the stage.

'I too, Madame, have a good husband.'

Then shrugging her black woollen shoulders, she added very softly with a cunning, confederate smile:

'All the same, my little lady, when I look for warmth, for understanding, for fidelity, I turn, not to any human being, but to Nanasse my dog.'

\* \* \* \* \*

When Richard came back an hour later, he found Charlotte sitting bolt upright in bed, her hands knotted round her raised knees. She did not turn her head as he came in but glared straight in front of her with round glassy eyes. A bright blue woollen scarf sagging round her shoulders took all the colour from her face. She looked at once like a sick child and an immeasurably old woman.

'Charlotte,' he said, feeling his heart contract with pity and terror. She did not speak or move. He took a step towards her.

'My dear, what is it? Are you ill? Have you had a dream?'

Still not looking at him, she spoke at last in a small, dry, high-pitched voice.

'Curious, aren't you? For such a *very* incurious chap.'

The pert words coming out of the stiff, livid face shocked him as if a corpse had begun to giggle. He sat down on the bed and taking her by both shoulders began to shake her.

'Charlotte, for God's sake.'

Her body rocked to and fro under his hands like a doll's. When he left off shaking her she went on in exactly the same tone.

'You might at least be decently polite to her. After all she is a friend of mine.'

Though he was in the direct line of her stare, he felt she could not see him.

'Charlotte,' he said quietly, 'Can you hear me speaking?'

Her expression changed. She turned her head as if she expected to find him at her side.

'Yes,' she answered fretfully, 'Of course I can hear you. 'What are you saying?'

Still quietly he went on.

'Now will you turn your head and look at *me*.'

There was a long pause before her head very slowly came round.

'And now, Charlotte, will you tell me what and who you are talking about?'

Her fine, almost invisible eyebrows went up. The eyes grew rounder still.

'Oh, *that*,' she said, like an impudent child. 'Didn't you know?'

'For Heaven's sake, stop this.' He crouched forward staring back at her like a hypnotist. Her eyes stayed blank and glassy; then a flicker of helpless terror came and went like the dart of a fin under ice.

'My dear, you *must* tell me. What is it I've done? Or that you imagine I've done.'

At last her eyelids relaxed. She tried to speak and could not, until she had passed her tongue two or three times over her dry lips.

'How do I know? I don't read letters.' She closed her eyes and added in a whisper, 'yet.'

He let out the breath he had been holding on a long sigh.

Sitting back on the bed, he took her hands in his. She struggled for a moment to tug them away, then let them lie cold and inert in his grip.



'Listen to me,' he said, 'You are torturing yourself in your imagination. About what?'

'You should know,' Her voice was reasonable but aloof.

'I will tell you what I think. You have found a letter written to me by' he swallowed, 'by someone we both know.'

'By Rachel Summerhill,' she said loudly.

'Mightn't there be a dozen explanations of that besides the one you're thinking of?'

'Even you can't invent a dozen reasons on the spur of the moment?' she said, glib as an actress. He let go of her hands abruptly.

'All right, if you want a scene, we'll have a scene. God knows I ought to be good at them by now.' He stood up.

She clutched wildly at him.

'No Richard, no Richard': her face crumpled up. 'I'll behave myself. Only don't be angry, don't leave me alone.'

'I'm not going.'

She put her hands on her cheeks as if to hold the skin and muscles in place.

'It's the not knowing I can't stand. I don't care how bad it is. You must tell me.'

'Suppose there's nothing to tell?'

She examined him with an old, searching, impersonal gaze. He gazed back at her unflinchingly.

'Your eyes never tell anything.'

'I'll answer any question you like.'

'Truthfully?'

'Yes. But, Charlotte, for both our sakes, think carefully before you ask.'

Suddenly she sighed, looking at him almost with friendliness.

'I wish I had no memory.'

'So do I.' He risked a faint smile.

She looked not at his face, but at the coat pocket over his heart.

'Rachel Summerhill. Somehow I didn't think she'd be the first. If she is the first.' She was silent for a minute. Then she began to mutter, like a child muttering to itself but meaning to be overheard. 'It doesn't make sense. I used to have to force him to stay in the days she came to see us. He said she was such a bore. What was it he called her? An American college virgin carrying the torch of knowledge on graduation day.'

He put his hand under her chin and lifted her head, gripping her jaw so firmly that she winced.

'Ask your questions. Or keep quiet,' he said roughly.

She wrenched her face away.

'Was it pleasant, making love with her? Who enjoyed it most, you or Rachel?'

In spite of himself, his hands flew up towards her neck. She gave a spurt of excited laughter.

'You don't have to answer now.'

But the words he was trying to keep back burst out, not through his throat, it seemed to him, but through his ribs. Automatically he put both hands on his chest as if to stop a flow of blood as he heard himself say:

'It was the only real thing that ever happened to either of us.'

Even then, Charlotte was so silent that for a whole minute he could believe he had not spoken and was merely watching words, written in smoke, fading on the air. He believed it until he looked at Charlotte's face and saw on it the same fear and exaltation he could feel on his own. For what seemed a long time they confronted each other, each searching the other's face like a mirror in an intimacy of disaster.

A gust of wind blew out the stiff lace curtains at the window. Charlotte gave a long shuddering sigh like a person waking from an anæsthetic. Her calmed face suddenly decomposed. She flung herself on Richard, tearing at his coat, butting his chest with her head.

He did not resist, but let her hammer him with blind, childish blows. Her whole body shook with dry sobs of anger. Finally, weak and breathless, she stopped battering at him and tried to push him away. He remained immovable, secure in himself and strong enough to pity her.

Charlotte dropped back, exhausted, on the pillows. Then, staring at the ceiling, she began a long monotonous babble like the babble in delirium. At first he tried not to listen. Then in spite of himself he was sucked into these endless coils of words. She raved quietly on and on, not attacking him, but coldly, ferociously accusing herself. For long intervals she would show no consciousness of his being there, then she would implore him to go further away.

'It's not safe for anyone to come near me. You don't understand. I am poisoned, poisoned right through.'

He did not dare to deny or to interrupt. The terrible words multiplied and multiplied, till he seemed to be watching the multiplication, cell by cell, of a cancer. He clenched his hands till the nails were white. He longed, like a fish gasping for water, not for Rachel herself, but for the thought of Rachel, cool, limited, single. But the thought of her could no more form in his mind than a snowflake could form in a hot room. It seemed to him that for all eternity he would never see anything but the lace curtains, the naked electric light, the photographs, the harsh blue scarf, and Charlotte's distorted face. To shut them out, he hid his face in his hands. But he could not shut out the voice. It went on: a rise and fall of sound in which he no longer distinguished words.

Then abruptly, it stopped. Other different noises followed. They conveyed nothing to him. He did not look up. He could feel Charlotte was no longer there in the bed. But he could not look up. A long time seemed to pass. Then a rasping, metallic noise behind him made him start so violently that he thought he must have fallen asleep. Uncovering his face and jumping up he saw Charlotte at the wide open window, carefully hoisting herself on to the ledge outside. In two steps he was behind her, holding her round the waist. She crouched down on the ledge and turned a blind, set face to him, not struggling, but resigning herself to his hold. They stood for a moment in a grotesque embrace; then, with the force of an uncoiling spring, Charlotte threw herself forward, nearly dragging him with her. Lurching half over the sill he could see far below the dark masses of slippery, jagged rock, half bared by the ebbing tide. He regained his balance and braced his knees, making his thighs and legs heavy. She was struggling now with unbelievable fury like a sail full of wind. His arms turned numb; his feet slithered on the floor but he still did not let go. Suddenly Charlotte seemed to dwindle to half her size. Turning, she slipped through his arms like a fish, and dropped down over the sill. For a second her white face hung suspended in the frame of the open window, then disappeared leaving only the two clinging hands. Richard reeled back, too weak to make any more effort.

The hands were relaxing their grip. They no longer seemed to have any connection with Charlotte. He found himself watching



them impersonally, waiting for them to disappear. His head was beginning to clear. He drew a deep breath of the cold, sea air and felt deeply refreshed. Now his head was perfectly clear. It contained a single thought.

'I want her to die,' he said to himself.

In the overwhelming relief of acknowledging it his muscles suddenly asserted themselves and adjusted themselves with extraordinary skill. He made a dive forward from his hips, reached down, caught Charlotte under the armpits and dragged her up through the window. A tremendous wave of exultation in his own strength, in the exquisitely stressed and balanced movement he had just made went over him. The limp dead weight of her body as he pulled her in and held her against him, her feet dangling, seemed no more than the weight of a small animal. He lowered her gently till her feet touched the floor. She leant on him unresisting, her head against his shoulder.

Still with one arm round her he closed the window and pulled down the curtains. Then he lifted her up, laid her on the bed, turned out the light and lay down beside her. She was still panting and shivering. He pulled his thick dressing-gown over them both and waited till her breathing was calm before he spoke. He was no longer frightened of anything he might say to her.

'Silly Charlotte. Why did you have to do that?'

She lay against him with an abandonment of trust he had never before felt in her.

'You wanted me dead,' she said peacefully.

He started, but she neither stiffened nor shrank away.

'You said so. Didn't you know?' Her voice was only a sleepy murmur.

He was too drunk with delicious torpor to answer. There was no more need for words; for the first time in their life together they were in complete accord. As they sank into the same profound sleep, they did not press closer, but their breathing gradually timed itself to the same rhythm till, at the vanishing point of consciousness, a single pulse seemed to beat through their two bodies.



# LIVING IN CITIES *by* ERNO GOLDFINGER

*Travelling Town Planning Exhibition of the 1940 Council*

'Everything that is wise has been thought already. We can only try to think it once more.' (Goethe.)

Out of all this bombing and suffering something good could grow—must grow! Facts must be faced. Misunderstandings cleared up, simply and candidly stated again and again:

Planning does not mean tyranny.

Order does not mean monotony.

Mass production does not mean ugliness.

Beauty is not a luxury.

Beauty does not cost anything.

There is no possible return to the past.

The destiny of cities lies in the integration of the 'past and not in the return to some "fancy" period'. It's no good trying to escape the implications of the present. The machine is a marvellous tool which should not be made the scapegoat of mental impotence. Use must be made of all our assets: technical resources, manpower and dreams. . . .

The story of all this is said simply and with faith. No tricks, no stunts, no 'shapes', but screen after screen of facts: past, present and future. It has been said before (there's nothing new under the sun), it has to be said again, but here it is well said. It unrolls like a documentary film.

The Exhibition starts off with a historic flash-back: the antique city at the foot of the acropolis. The mediæval city round the castle and later the cathedral. The renaissance city, for city's sake. Then the blackest spot of early machine age. . . . Some lost opportunities and some found: the tragedy of London re-planning after the Great Fire. Paris: the usurper Napoleon III wants to be able to rake the mob with grape-shot, hence the marvellous avenues and boulevards of Baron Haussmann. Lost opportunities: Ypres 1918; Tokio 1923. . . .

The cities can become again centres of civilization where men and women can live happy lives. The technical means exist, the knowledge exists, to satisfy human needs. The will to plan must be aroused. There is no obstacle, but ignorance and wickedness. Planning means freedom.

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DESMOND MACCARTHY in *Sunday Times*

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1 (1941): Poems by William Carlos Williams, Charles Henri Ford, James Laughlin, Oscar Williams, Gordon Sylander, Howard Blake, Gene Derwood, Arthur Blair, Bert Brecht (translated by Frank Jones); Public Library, by Weldon Kees; Bert Brecht and the Poetry of Action, by Frank Jones.

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